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The American Mercury

JUNE 1949

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ELEANOR ROOSEVELT:

First Lady of the World

by JOHN REDDY, page 656

CONQUERING UTERINE CANCER

Milton L. Zisowitz

GENERAL WALTER BEDELL SMITH MEETS THE PRESS

JIM CROW IN THE NORTH

George S. Schuyler

THE BALTIMORE SUNPAPERS

Mary H. Cadwalader

HUNTINGTON CAIRNS, FEDERAL CENSOR

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VOLUME LXVIII

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In addition to these articles there will be several other features, and also the usual departments: The Theatre, The Library, The Soap Box, Down to Earth, The Open Forum, and the Check List.

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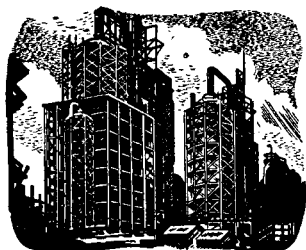
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A year of Progress and Results for an Oil-using World!..

OIL SHORTAGE FEARS of a year ago have vanished. All around the world, oil resources are expanding. In doing their part to meet the rising needs for oil, this Company and its affiliates last year made the greatest efforts in their history. Here are some facts from this Company's Annual Report to its more than 200,000 stockholders . . .

1 TOTAL PRODUCTION AGAIN INCREASED.

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2 EVEN GREATER COSTS FOR EXPANSION AND REPLACEMENT

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3 NEW FACILITIES RESULTED ALL OVER THE OIL-PRODUCING WORLD.

In Venezuela, the world's largest pipeline was completed. Fourteen new supertankers were ordered, each nearly twice the capacity of wartime tankers. At Montreal and Edmonton in Canada; at Billings, Montana; Linden, New Jersey; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, new refining facilities for more and better oil products went into service. At Amuay, Venezuela, a new

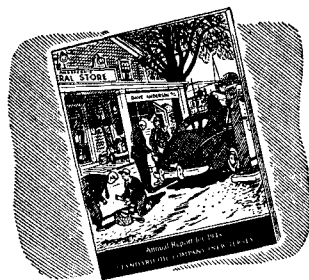
60,000 barrels per day refinery neared completion.

4 RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYEES CONTINUED EXCELLENT. Again there were no domestic strikes or work stoppages. At year's end the gross investment in property, plant and equipment amounted to \$26,600 for each of the 129,000 employees of Jersey and its affiliated companies.

5 BOTH INCOME AND EXPENDITURES ROSE. As reported in the consolidated statement, total income of all companies was \$3,332,187,000, an increase of 40% over 1947. At the same time, costs were also up 40%. \$1,386,248,000 was paid for crude oil and other supplies, \$573,459,000 paid to employees, \$492,000,000 for other operating costs. Taxes of \$268,000,000 were paid.

6 RECORD NET EARNINGS, LARGELY PLOUGHED BACK. Consolidated net earnings totaled \$365,605,000. Yet this

total, plus affiliates' earnings assignable to stockholders other than Jersey, plus all of the year's depreciation allowances was just about equal to the amount of money put back into the business to meet pressing needs for expansion and replacements. Stockholders of Standard Oil Company (N.J.) received dividends of \$2.00 per share of the Company's stock, plus a stock dividend of two shares for each 40 shares held.



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The American Mercury

CONQUERING UTERINE CANCER

BY

MILTON L. ZISOWITZ

This is one of the most important medical articles ever to appear in THE AMERICAN MERCURY. It deals with a very prevalent and deadly form of cancer, and presents a method of diagnosis that promises to save thousands of women's lives every year. The article was read by several specialists in the United States and Canada, including Dr. George N. Papanicolaou of the Cornell University Medical College, Dr. J. Ernest Ayre, director of the Cytological Laboratories of McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and Dr. Robert Chambers, research professor of biology at Washington Square College of New York University. Mr. Zisowitz, the author of the article, is a science writer of wide experience, whose articles in the MERCURY on medical subjects have won the respect of the medical profession.

CANCER of the uterus kills more than 25,000 American women each year. Many experts feel that at least 20,000 of these lives could be saved if already existing methods for early diagnosis of the disease could be brought within the reach of every woman in America. For, say the doctors, early cancer of the cervix — by far the most common and the most

deadly form of uterine carcinoma — should be curable in almost 100 per cent of cases if adequate treatment is applied in time. The killer is actually not so much the disease itself as the delay in diagnosis and the resultant delay in treatment. Today, according to Drs. George W. McClure and Richard B. Cattell of the famous Lahey Clinic in Boston, only 11 of

100 women with cancer of the cervix reach the surgeon when the lesion is in the early operable stage; 29 are in the stage of so-called borderline operability; while in 60 the lesion is totally inoperable. This despite the fact that the important discoveries of Dr. George N. Papanicolaou of Cornell University Medical College, and later modifications and refinements by Dr. J. Ernest Ayre of McGill University, have provided the medical profession with a comparatively simple aid to diagnosis which, if properly used, should detect at least 90 per cent of cervical cancers early enough to insure complete cure.

The Papanicolaou techniques are now being hailed as the outstanding advance of the century in cancer; and yet it is more than twenty years since their discoverer published the first announcement that cancer cells could be recognized by microscopic examination of the secretions which are found in the human vagina. The floor of this organ is a natural collecting pool for the cells which are constantly being shed from the surfaces which line the entire lower female genital tract. Since almost all uterine carcinomas start in this surface lining, and since cancer cells are cast off even more profusely and rapidly than normal cells, any malignancy of the body of the uterus or of the cervix is likely to reveal itself by tell-tale cells in the vaginal pool. Most important, Dr. Papanicolaou's so-called vaginal smear technique disclosed cancer cells not only in cases

where the growth was so far advanced that it had become clinically evident by other means and was therefore less likely to be curable, but also in cases where the malignancy had made such slight progress as to give no clinical symptoms or suspicion of disease — a stage in which treatment was likely to be 100 per cent effective.

This aspect of Dr. Papanicolaou's work — the apparent ability to reveal cancer of the uterus in its early pre-clinical stages — captured the imaginations and raised the hopes of physicians all over the world. Heretofore, despite careful and frequent examinations, and despite some well established diagnostic aids, the discovery of even relatively early carcinoma of the body or the cervix of the uterus was rare and frequently almost accidental. Cancer in its earliest stages is always so small that it can neither be seen by the naked eye nor diagnosed by the X-ray. Even the surgical biopsy — the microscopic examination of minute pieces of suspected tissues removed from the body — although it is reliable in establishing a diagnosis of malignancy, is relatively inefficient for detecting early cancer. The bit of tissue must be taken exactly from that portion of the cervix where tumor is present. If the growth is clearly visible, the site of the surgical biopsy may be easily determined, but the chances of missing the cancer are very great in the early stage.

The problem is similar in cancer of the body of the uterus. Here, tissue

for microscopic study must be scraped from the entire lining by a surgical procedure known as curettage. Moreover, since both surgical biopsy and curettage ordinarily require hospitalization, they are used primarily on patients who are definitely suspected of harboring cancer. It is obviously impractical to use these methods as office or clinic routine in examining large numbers of apparently healthy women. If its reliability could be further substantiated, the vaginal smear technique held out the first real ray of hope that the lives of thousands of women could be saved each year by the detection of unsuspected cancers of the uterus in time to effect complete cure.

II

Teams of scientists in various research centers went into action, setting themselves the dual task of checking the validity of the new technique and of applying it to its most humanitarian function—the diagnosis of early uterine cancer. Dr. Papanicolaou, himself, led the way in this phase of the investigation. With Dr. Herbert F. Traut, he studied the vaginal smears which for three years were a part of the routine examination of every patient admitted to the Woman's Clinic at the Cornell University-New York Hospital center. Drs. Papanicolaou and Traut also examined smears obtained from the Memorial Hospital for Cancer and Allied Diseases and from the Woman's Hospital. In this study, 3014 women

were intensively investigated. At the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, Dr. Joe V. Meigs, Ruth Graham, and their associates, who were the first to confirm Papanicolaou's vaginal smear findings, have examined several thousand cases. Another large series of studies has been made by Dr. J. Ernest Ayre who recently reported on smears that were taken in 7830 cases at the Royal Victoria Hospital of McGill University and at the Cytology Center for the Prevention of Cancer in Montreal. Additional thousands of tests have been made at Dr. Papanicolaou's laboratory in New York Hospital, and at such institutions as the New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital, the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, the Cytology Institute in New York, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, the Seibels Laboratory at Duke University, the White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles, the Kate Depew Strang Prevention Clinic of New York's Memorial Hospital, and many others. Up to June 1947, various cytologists had studied an estimated total of over 40,000 cases. Although figures vary slightly from report to report, the investigators agree that the smear technique is at least 90 per cent accurate in diagnosing cancer of the uterus. Accuracy is even greater in detecting the most common form of uterine malignancy, carcinoma of the cervix. The opinions of the scientists who have studied this method are summed up by Dr.

Hugh F. Hare of the Lahey Clinic, who says, "The method for the diagnosis of uterine cancer by the vaginal smear is undoubtedly the most valuable diagnostic aid which has been brought to light since the advent of the biopsy."

Even more remarkable than its accuracy is the ability of the vaginal smear to detect cancer of the uterus where other diagnostic methods fail, and most important, its efficacy in revealing malignant growths in their early stages — before they have begun to invade the surrounding tissues. From every research center, come enthusiastic reports of such diagnostic successes. Drs. Papanicolaou and Traut cite the case of a woman who was admitted to the hospital with a diagnosis of benign tumor of the uterus and secondary anemia. Vaginal smears taken on admission showed typical cervical cancer cells although there was no visible lesion. Despite the report based on the smears indicating definite cancer of the cervix, the surgeon, after careful examination, could not be convinced that carcinoma was present. He decided, therefore, to remove only that portion of the uterus in which the tumor appeared. Study of the excised uterus confirmed the benign nature of the growth, but vaginal smears made after the operation continued to show cancer cells in considerable numbers. Before discharge from the hospital, a random surgical biopsy of the cervix was made. Fortunately, the biopsy included the area of malignant change,

for the microscopic examination clearly showed a cancer that had just begun to invade the surrounding tissues. The cervix was amputated, and final study revealed that there was just this one small area of malignant growth. Had the vaginal smear not detected the carcinoma, it would probably have continued to grow until it had become sufficiently advanced to be detected by other means, too late to save this woman's life.

Every other investigator reports similar early diagnoses, but perhaps the most startling case of all was found by Dr. Ayre, using his "surface-biopsy" modification of the original smear technique. An apparently healthy woman of 28 came to the clinic for a routine physical check-up and cancer detection screening. She had no real physical complaints, nor could the examining physician find anything seriously wrong with her. "Surface-biopsy" of the cervix, however, presented a convincing cell-picture of cervical cancer. On the other hand, surgical biopsy, routinely used to double-check suspicious cases, failed to reveal the location of the lesion. Even following the microscopic study of 79 sections of tissue cut from the cervix, the pathologists reported that they could find no evidence of malignancy. Not until an additional 40 sections were cut, was the microscopically small cervical carcinoma revealed, corroborating the diagnosis that had already been made on the basis of a single "surface-biopsy" smear.

A modification and refinement of Dr. Papanicolaou's vaginal smear technique, Dr. Ayre's "surface-biopsy" has been readily accepted by pathologists because it is somewhat closer to a surgical biopsy, collecting the cells by a gentle scraping from the spot where biopsies are usually taken. Cancer of the cervix is different from any other human cancer because the dime-sized area where it will form with greatest frequency is known and is accessible. The frequency of development of cancer at this point is so great that progressive gynecologists, such as Johns Hopkins' Dr. Telinde, secure a surgical biopsy on every cervix in the search for this deadly cancer in its early curable stage. The "surface-biopsy" from this point, however, combines the efficiency of the surgical biopsy with the great simplicity of Dr. Papanicolaou's smear, although the original method is thought to be more valuable in finding carcinoma of the genital tract as a whole. It is a simple and painless office procedure, yet it has been reported to be a most sensitive method of detection of cancer of the cervix. It is the method used to illustrate the Papanicolaou technique in the splendid new film, *Cancer: the Problem of Early Diagnosis*, recently released to the medical profession by the National Cancer Institute, Washington, and the American Cancer Society.

In April of 1947, Dr. Ayre published a paper describing the development and use of what he first called the spatula cytology technique, and

what is now commonly known as the "surface-biopsy." Previous methods consisted in using a glass pipette to withdraw cells which had already been shed. The "surface-biopsy" is a means of collecting the cells before they have been spontaneously cast off, by gently scraping the vulnerable area where cancer is known to develop. By using the "surface-biopsy," clusters of cells are obtained not only from the entire area surrounding the cervical opening, but from deeper cell-layers that have not yet been shed and are therefore unobtainable by the smear method. This presents an over-all cell picture of the entire cervical area and makes for greater accuracy in diagnosis. Most important of all, because "surface-biopsy" collects younger cells — cells which have not matured to the point where they are spontaneously shed — earlier malignant changes can be recognized than was possible by the use of older methods.

One of the most hopeful aspects of these new methods is that, because diagnosis may be made in the very earliest stage of the disease, in certain cases a cervix cancer may be surgically removed without necessarily destroying a woman's ability to bear children. The treatment of a womb cancer has heretofore been so mutilating that even should a patient survive removal of the growth, it was a foregone conclusion that she could never again have a child. The cases of two young patients, 29 and 30 years old respectively, herald a new epoch. In these two cases, cancers of the cervix

were removed without dooming the patients to future childlessness, a development rare in medical history. Diagnosis of the carcinomas at an extremely early pre-invasive stage permitted the surgeon to remove only the growths themselves and a small adjacent portion of normal tissue. The wombs were left intact, the fertility of the patients preserved, and both these women have since successfully borne children. Now, two years after the surgery in one case and four years after in the other, their "surface-biopsy" tests indicate no further malignant activity, and they remain well. Naturally, both these women are still under intensive scrutiny to determine whether there is a tendency for the cancers to return. Dr. Ayre is still taking tests every three months, and he plans to keep these two new mothers under close observation for at least five more years. However, the "surface-biopsy" is so efficient and so accurate that even if the growths should begin to recur, they would probably be detected while they were still curable. In the meantime, in these cases, the "surface-biopsy" can be credited not only with saving two lives, but with making possible the creation of two new lives.

III

Aside from its immediate practical value in the early diagnosis of malignancy, the "surface-biopsy" technique has opened up what may well be one of the most important approaches to cancer treatment and re-

search in many years. Using the vaginal smear method exclusively, Dr. Papanicolaou in some cases found cast-off cells which he called "suspicious" without committing himself as to their significance. Dr. Ayre, on the other hand, using the cervical spatula which reaches below the shedding level describes cell-clusters showing unusual nuclear changes which he is convinced are pre-cancerous.

After studying many thousands of samples of cells scraped from the cervix in apparently normal cases, Dr. Ayre has described a group of cells which he has termed the "pre-cancer cell-complex," which while not yet fully-developed malignant cells, show clear signs of becoming cancerous. He has tentatively called these cells the "nearo-cancer" or "youthful" cancer cells. For many years, scientists have suspected that there is a transition stage between the perfectly normal and the malignant cell. The late Dr. James Ewing, one of the greatest of all cancer specialists, said, "It is not true that a pathological condition must be either cancer or not cancer. It may be neither one nor the other. It may be in the process of becoming cancer." Dr. Emil Novak, Johns Hopkins University gynecologist, states, "During the past few years, considerable evidence [has been] accumulating to suggest, though not perhaps to prove, that there is actually a very gradual transition from the benign to the malignant." He points out, though, that this stepping-stone period is difficult to study because the

pathological material from such lesions is hard to get. The "surface-biopsy," however, because its simplicity makes it possible to study thousands of cases, has enabled Dr. Ayre to investigate this transitional period very thoroughly, specifically in reference to the cervix. Speaking recently before a group of pathologists in Washington, Dr. Ayre said the following:

It is our belief that the "surface-biopsy" studies from the cervix on cases which we have followed during the past three years present significant evidence to indicate that a cancer precursor cell has been identified. It is our belief that this cell, while not a cancer cell, represents the earliest evidence in human cells of a trend to cancer. It is a signal that cancer will develop in one or two years. We must stress, however, that this "nearo-carcinoma" diagnosis is only possible in the cervix at the present time.

It is important to note that in every case studied by Dr. Ayre, the diagnosis of "nearo-cancer" was made on women who were apparently perfectly healthy and who had visited the doctor merely for routine physical examinations. Take, for example, the 32-year-old mother of three children who came to the free clinic for a routine examination in June 1948. She had no specific complaints, but remarked that since the birth of her last child two years previously, she had not felt up to par and was extremely irritable. A general physical examination proved negative, and the cervix appeared innocent. "Surface-biopsy," however, revealed "nearo-

carcinoma." The patient was therefore followed carefully and given repeat "surface-biopsies" at three-month intervals. In September, the diagnosis was still the same, but the doctors decided to perform a surgical biopsy to be absolutely certain. The tissue examination showed no signs of cancer. Nevertheless, the patient was still followed and continued to show "nearo-cancer" cells. Sixty "surface-biopsies" were taken during the course of the next five months. Toward the end of this period, the "surface-biopsies" began to pick up fully developed malignant cells, and in March of this year, a second surgical biopsy while the cervix still appeared perfectly normal revealed a definite early carcinoma. The "surface-biopsy," then, diagnosed "nearo-cancer" in this patient ten months before the true malignancy appeared.

In other cases, Dr. Ayre has been able to predict cancer one to two years before it manifested itself even in its earliest form. Another one to two years would elapse before the growth was visually or clinically apparent — the time when a surgical biopsy would ordinarily be taken. The life-history of the cancer cells is such that after another two to four years the patient would usually die if untreated. During all his researches, Dr. Ayre has not found a single case where the "nearo-carcinoma" has spontaneously reversed itself and returned to normalcy. On the contrary, while in most cases the "nearo-cancer" cells have persisted and are still under

close scrutiny, nine patients have already been observed in which the "nearo-cancer" stage has progressed to true malignancy. The implications of the identification of this "nearo-cancer" cell both for treatment and for continued research into the mechanisms of cancer development are indeed great.

IV

While the medical profession is highly optimistic about the possibilities of these new techniques for the detection of early uterine cancer, it is uncertain about the feasibility of applying these tests on a really large scale. After stressing early diagnosis as today's best hope for the cure of cancer, and after urging periodic examination of apparently well persons for silent tumors, a recent editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* strikes a note of despondency by pointing out that the cost of diagnostic centers to screen even the adult female population would be prohibitive. Some doctors, as a matter of fact, urge soft-pedaling the new diagnostic tests because they maintain that there are not enough trained experts to interpret them. At a recent conference, one doctor frankly complained, "There has been altogether too much publicity on these new diagnostic methods. Soon we will be accused of malpractice if we do not perform some sort of smear test on every woman who comes into the office. Patients clamor for it, but I cannot interpret it, nor do I know

anyone in my district who can." In other words, thousands of American women must continue to die needlessly of uterine cancer each year not because the means for saving their lives are not at hand, but because facilities are so inadequate. Very few physicians deny the value of the new detection methods. The pessimists simply surrender to the difficulties involved in making these life-saving tests more generally available.

And yet, for the past four years, findings coming from a "pilot-plant" testing laboratory in Montreal offer one solution. Dr. Ayre believes the results have demonstrated the feasibility of central laboratories, manned by experts, rendering widespread cytological service to physicians. A simple technique worked out by Dr. Ayre and his chief technician, Miss Evelyn Dakin, enables preservation of the test smears up to two weeks, so that they can be sent through the mails. Although it does require a considerable amount of training to interpret a "surface-biopsy" or a vaginal smear, any doctor, no matter how limited his facilities or his experience may be, can prepare the test slide. Sent to a central laboratory by airmail, the test can be processed and interpreted by experts in from 30 to 60 minutes and a report returned to the family physician as speedily as the telephone, telegraph, or airmail can carry it. A doctor in Miami, Florida, received the report 36 hours after he had mailed the slide to Montreal. Since the central laboratory's inception,

physicians from 42 states and from eight provinces of Canada have mailed in a total of 3455 tests. Slides have even come from Cuba, from the British West Indies, and from the Union of South Africa. Using this airmail cancer detection system, 109 cancers were diagnosed and an additional 143 cases showing the presence of pre-cancer cells were reported. This comparatively small cancer screening operation has convinced Dr. Ayre that *the family doctor-air mail method*, applied on a larger scale, could save thousands of lives each year by assuring early diagnosis, thus making possible elimination of the cancer by surgery, X-ray or radium.

A life-saving test as valuable as this should not be available only to the few — it should be available to all, — perhaps without charge, or at least within reach of all classes.

A great need exists for special laboratories to render service in different sections of the country. A central institute is needed to train

new cytologists and screening technicians, to foster research, and to co-operate with existing hospital and university laboratories. Dr. Ayre estimates that four cytopathologists and 30 carefully trained technicians could screen a quarter of a million cases a year at an estimated cost of \$400,000. Applied on a truly national scale, with either government assistance or endowment from private funds, every American woman past the age of 30 could be checked each year.

The "surface-biopsy" and vaginal smear techniques have proved their value. The airmail method has been shown to be practicable and efficient. The family doctors provide 100,000 potential cancer detection clinics which cover the United States. Only imagination, organization, and the traditional ability of the American people to get things done when they need to be done, are required to save the lives of 20,000 women each year by conquering uterine cancer.



ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: FIRST LADY OF THE WORLD

BY JOHN REDDY

WHEN she first burst upon a rather astonished national consciousness with the inauguration of her husband as President in 1933, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt appeared to be the epitome of the Helen Hokinson club-woman — a redoubtable do-gooder who poked around in coal mines and lectured women's clubs in a high-pitched squeak on the virtues of Melanesian folk dancing. Before long, Republicans were growling about her endless airplane trips, Southern congressmen were damning her sympathy for Negroes, Westbrook Pegler was investigating her forebears, admirers were puzzling over her amazing energy, and night-club entertainers were imitating her unusual tremolo giggle.

Today — several hundred lectures, countless thousands of airplane miles, and sixteen years later — Mrs. Roosevelt has become not only greatly admired and respected in this country but perhaps even more popular abroad. When she walked through the United Nations General Assembly after its passage of the Declaration of Human

Rights, which she had patiently shepherded for three years, the entire group of hundreds of delegates rose and gave her a prolonged ovation — the only time a member has been so honored. In England, where she went for dedication of a plaque to her late husband in Westminster Abbey and to receive an honorary degree from Oxford University, men raised their hats and women applauded as she passed. "She has walked with kings," editorialized the London *News Chronicle*, "but never lost the common touch." Even when she visited Stuttgart, Germany, in 1946, she was given a warm reception, although she told the Germans they must assume guilt for the war.

Time magazine, which has frequently lampooned her and her family, said recently on her birthday: "At 64, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt has become perhaps the best known woman in the world. She has reversed the usual lot of Presidents' widows by gaining measurably in stature and prestige." The United Press named her "Woman

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of the Year" for 1948, and when the *Woman's Home Companion* asked its readers, "What American — man or woman — now living do you admire most?" Mrs. Roosevelt won handily over General Eisenhower, General Marshall, General MacArthur, President Truman, former President Hoover and Bing Crosby, in that order.

Mrs. Roosevelt is seen so often and in so many places that she is sometimes suspected of being the first person since St. Anthony to have the power of multi-location. She is also probably heard more often and in more ways than any person in public life, through her column "My Day," which goes to eighty-odd newspapers, her page which formerly appeared in the *Ladies' Home Journal* and now appears in *McCall's*, her "Eleanor and Anna" radio program with her daughter over more than 200 American Broadcasting Company stations, her books, and her many lectures, interviews, and miscellaneous broadcasts.

Just a shade under six feet tall, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt — as she prefers to be called — is a rather awesome person. She does not smoke, drinks one glass of wine on state occasions, dislikes bridge, abhors chewing gum and uses no cosmetics. She is usually serious, and her face, especially in repose, is so grave as to be almost stern. At the same time, she is an extremely friendly person who washes her own stockings, rides the subways, and dotes on her five children and seventeen grandchildren. People who would never dream of asking, say, the Duch-

ess of Windsor, for her autograph, think nothing of cornering Mrs. Roosevelt on a train or plane — where she spends a good deal of time — and telling her their family troubles, illustrated by dog-eared photographs of the wife and kids.

II

Although born to a wealthy and prominent family (her Uncle Theodore was later President), there was little in Anna Eleanor Roosevelt's background or early life to suggest that she would one day be the most famous woman in the world. She was a lonely, painfully shy little girl who for a time wore a steel brace for a spine curvature, and who describes herself as an "ugly duckling." She adored her father, but felt keenly the contrast between her mother's beauty and her own plain looks. "My mother was always a little troubled by my lack of beauty," she wrote in the first volume of her autobiography, *This Is My Story*. "She tried very hard to bring me up well so my manners would in some way compensate for my looks, but her efforts only made me more keenly conscious of my shortcomings."

Both her mother and father died before she was ten, and she had a strict upbringing in the home of her maternal grandmother on the Hudson River and in schools in France and England. Her marriage to her fifth cousin, Franklin, was marred by differences with his mother and by the tragedy of infantile paralysis which struck him in 1921, leaving his legs

paralyzed. Her strict rearing, however, had given her an inflexible character, and adversity only deepened her determination to assist her husband to resume his promising career in public life. The ensuing years of patient work and her rôle as Governor's wife taught her much about politics and human nature.

Consequently, when Franklin Roosevelt completed his comeback from polio by election to the Presidency, his wife brought to the White House a spartan character, the curiosity of a house detective, and the energy of a mountain goat.

"Mother was still a rather shy person when we first came to Washington," her daughter Anna says. "But she had a keen sense of right and wrong and, above all, could never stand by if anything needed to be done."

The result was that the new First Lady plunged into a bewildering round of activities that probably caused Dolly Madison to turn over in her grave. She began weekly news conferences, wrote and lectured for pay and gave most of the proceeds to charity, joined a union (the Newspaper Guild), shuttled around the country investigating prisons and slums, and, in general, quickly made herself the most controversial President's wife in history.

With the death of President Roosevelt in 1945, it was assumed by many people that they would thereafter hear less of his widow. Quite the reverse has been true. She has been even

more active than formerly, with her activities now on an international rather than a national scale.

During her 12 years in the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt maintained a painful politeness toward practically everything, even personal attacks from any source, whether *Pravda* or Pegler. If she felt indignation on any issue she rarely showed it publicly, although she occasionally fell into what she calls "my Griselda mood," in which, as she describes it, "I simply shut up like a clam, not telling anyone what is the matter and being much too obviously humble and meek." But lately there has been a noticeable stiffening of her attitude on many subjects, especially Russia. She was formerly accused of Communist leanings, because of her friendship with pink-tinted U. S. youth groups. Hence the Soviets are now annoyed by her strong stand against them. She has also struck out in a decidedly un-clam-like fashion against Congressman John Rankin ("one of the worst Southern reactionaries"), the Southern Dixiecrats (whom she advocates throwing out of the Democratic party), and the Ku Klux Klan ("There's very little difference between a Nazi brownshirt and a Georgia nightshirt").

For years she refused to answer Westbrook Pegler's attacks on her and her family, turning aside questions by saying: "I hardly know Mr. Pegler. Without knowing him better, I do not feel justified in having any opinion of him." Recently, however, when someone asked her why her

sons didn't horsewhip the columnist, she replied: "Why should they bother to horsewhip a poor little creature like Westbrook Pegler? They would probably go to jail for attacking someone who was older and perhaps unable to defend himself. After all, he is such a little gnat on the horizon."

III

Her growing candor is probably the result of having shed the responsibilities of a President's wife, and the tough schooling of rough-and-tumble dealing with the Russian representatives in the UN.

When Mrs. Roosevelt was first appointed as a delegate to the United Nations by President Truman, in December 1945, she was looked upon by a good many people as an earnest but rather inept choice who would have difficulty handling the vitriolic USSR representative in debate on touchy world problems. She has proved herself a strong and able debater, however, with a determined will and a quick mind behind a deceptively mild exterior. Last fall in Paris she more than held her own with Professor Pavlov, the gray-haired, black-bearded Soviet representative on her committee, and on one occasion upbraided him so strongly that the Soviet professor cried in outraged tones that she had "insulted" him.

"I don't like to quarrel with Professor Pavlov," she said, "because I know he must say the things he is told, so it really isn't worth answering him. But if I don't answer his loose

statements, he thinks he is getting away with them."

Izvestia recently called Mrs. Roosevelt a "hypocritical servant of capitalism," while the *Literary Gazette* said: "Mrs. Roosevelt's senile weakness for loquacity has been combined with a special and anti-Soviet tinge. It is obvious from her articles and speeches that indeed she does not think too much about what she says and writes."

These attacks have had little effect, and Mrs. Roosevelt remains undoubtedly the most influential single delegate to the UN, and one whose least action, even inadvertent, carries great weight. Recently she remarked in her column on what a long time the French took for their meals, meaning it as a compliment to their cooking and capacity for enjoying life. "Imagine my horror," she confided to her radio audience shortly afterward, "to discover that the French Foreign Office had issued an edict that henceforth when I was attending any function there were to be fewer courses and the meal was to be served more rapidly!"

Mrs. Roosevelt's influence as an international figure is a tribute to the memory of her husband and to the vigor with which she has attacked her job as a delegate to the UN. When the UN is in session, she gets up at seven and often works steadily until after midnight. Although she is 64, and nearly deaf in one ear, she sets a fearsome pace, loping along, leaning forward like a man going downhill on

skis. This feverish pace reached an all-time high in Paris last fall, when she was attending three UN sessions daily — morning, afternoon and night. In between she sandwiched appointments, speeches, interviews, dictated “My Day,” and broadcast her radio program to the United States. During one lunch period, she short-waved her own program to America, participated in a round-table discussion in French for the French radio, was interviewed, also in French, for the Swiss radio, and spoke in English over Radio Luxembourg. She then hastily gulped a bowl of leek-and-potato soup, munched a piece of French bread, and rushed back to her committee.

IV

“Mrs. Roosevelt’s secret for getting so much done is her ability to do two or more things at once, and her ability to keep going when everyone else’s tongue is hanging out,” according to Malvina Thompson (“Tommy” to Mrs. Roosevelt), her secretary and close friend for the past 26 years.

Mrs. R., as the former First Lady is known to Tommy (who can’t bring herself to say Eleanor, despite repeated requests), has numerous ingenious ways for doing more than one thing at a time. She formerly took setting-up exercises on arising, but of late has been doubling up by making her bed, even turning the mattress each day. This gives her a brisk workout and a sense of order from having the bed properly made. Often, when she is to talk with visitors or to be

interviewed, she uses the rare opportunity of sitting down to do some additional task, such as knitting or shell-ing peas, meanwhile carrying on a sprightly conversation with her guests. Sometimes she does this while having company for tea, so that on such occasions she is sipping, knitting and talking simultaneously.

She is always looking for new ways to combine duties, and once tried dictating “My Day” to Tommy while taking a bath. She dropped the practice of combining other activities with bathing, however, after she twice let her Paris hotel bathtub run over while engrossed in her “home work,” as she calls the daily UN reports.

After a day which leaves most delegates collapsed in easy chairs, Mrs. Roosevelt “relaxes” by tackling her mail. She gets about a thousand letters a week, most of them from obscure people, causes and organizations, and almost all of them asking for help in one way or another. These range from requests to plead the cause of minority groups before the United Nations, to appeals to find errant husbands. About half of the letters are in foreign languages, so they go first to government translators who put them into English and pass them along to Miss Thompson. She sorts them, and the most important ones are answered by Mrs. R., the rest by Tommy and her three assistants.

“She won’t allow anyone to sign her signature,” Tommy says. “If a letter is signed by her it means she wrote it.” How Mrs. Roosevelt keeps

up this grueling schedule is still something of a mystery, but one clue is her uncanny ability to relax completely on a moment's notice. "I sometimes catch a few winks during debate in committee," she recently confessed, "when the delegate from one of the Soviet satellite countries is speaking. I know he will only repeat what the USSR delegate has already said."

She also has the ability to nod off quickly in a train or automobile, but she has been more sparing in this practice since the time she dozed off inadvertently while at the wheel of her car and hit another machine.

One drawback to her gift for total relaxation and tremendous concentration on world affairs is that Mrs. Roosevelt misses some of the lighter things in life. She recently startled one of her numerous grandsons when he proudly announced that Alan Ladd had crossed the Atlantic on the *America* with him. Pleasantly, she inquired, "Who is Mr. Alan Ladd?"

A group of friends were discussing this intense seriousness recently, and a young lady publicist made a penetrating observation: "It's true that Mrs. R. is a serious person, and perhaps she doesn't have much of a sense of humor. But if it would help anyone, or do some good, I'll bet she'd be funnier than Milton Berle."

Clothes come under the heading of the less serious things in life for Mrs. Roosevelt and, although she is always well-groomed, she discusses her appearance with the spirit of a flagellant. Similarly she pays little heed to her

partial deafness. In England last October she was being honored at a dinner given by an old friend, the Dowager Marchioness of Reading. Herbert Morrison had a point he particularly wished to get over to Mrs. Roosevelt, and had quietly arranged to be seated next to her. But when the guests sat down, their hostess realized that she had placed Mr. Morrison on Mrs. Roosevelt's right, so that his entire conversation would be poured into her deaf ear. Lady Reading had begun to stammer apologetically about a mistake in the seating arrangement when Mrs. Roosevelt interrupted gently: "You needn't be so subtle, Stella. I know you want Herbert on my good ear."

Mrs. Roosevelt dreads ceremony and fuss, especially over herself. She has always refused to have a bodyguard, even when she was in the White House, and constantly bobs up alone in elevators, taxicabs and on the subway.

Vincent Murphy, an assistant manager of the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York, relates the trials of that hostelry in its efforts to accord Mrs. Roosevelt the reception due such a distinguished guest. "Whenever we hear that she is coming to some function at the Waldorf," he says, "we phone her and ask at what entrance she will arrive so we can have someone meet her. She always says, 'Nonsense, I know my way around the Waldorf as well as my own house; I'll just dash in alone.'"

Determined to handle the matter

formally at any cost, the Waldorf stations assistant managers at *all* entrances the night of the function. "A taxi pulls up," Murphy says philosophically, "and Mrs. Roosevelt bounds out like a deer. An assistant manager rushes up to greet her properly, but she just smiles and says, 'Good evening,' and keeps right on loping along to where she's going. Our men try to run along beside her, but she gradually outdistances them."

v

Mrs. Roosevelt is in constant demand as a speaker here and abroad. And although she was a hesitant speaker when she first came to the White House, years of talking have developed her into an excellent orator, forceful and well informed. John Masterson, a radio producer who has handled such well known ad-libbers as the late Tom Breneman, John Nelson and Gary Moore, says: "She can talk for any reasonable length of time on any reasonable subject, and make it good. You can say, 'Give us four minutes and 30 seconds on the problem of partition in Lebanon,' and she'll come out on the nose."

Mrs. Roosevelt speaks French, Italian and German with varying degrees of fluency. Her French is so good that during the UN Assembly meeting in Paris she spoke frequently in that language to French groups. Although she hadn't spoken German for years, she insisted on speaking in that tongue when invited to address the women doctors of Stuttgart in

October 1948. To brush up her rusty pronunciation, she spent the entire flight to Stuttgart rehearsing. Afterward, a listener wrote: "This is the first time in history the victor comes to the conquered people and makes a speech in his language. That gives me reason to believe in a free democracy."

"Why in the world do you do so much?" I asked her recently after one particularly grueling day.

"One thing just seems to lead to another," she explained. "I'm principally interested in my job as a delegate to the UN, but I couldn't do nearly as good a job if I didn't talk with groups in Europe and the United States, to see what people think about the UN, and if I didn't write and broadcast to help explain what the UN is and what it's doing. I sometimes remember when I was young and could just sit down to read or sew, and I think, 'Goodness, that would be nice.' But I just couldn't drop any of the things I'm doing."

With all her talents for accomplishment, Mrs. Roosevelt has no desire for public or political office, and has always dismissed as "too silly to talk about" reports she might be named Secretary of State or Ambassador to France. "If I were a candidate for office, I couldn't avoid the aura of my husband," she says. "This would be both a stick to beat me with and a club with which to accomplish things, and I think both would be bad. I simply hope I can continue to work to strengthen the United Nations and make it a real instrument for peace."

JIM CROW IN THE NORTH

BY GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

PEOPLE in the North tend to look down on Southerners in the matter of discrimination against the Negro, and to pride themselves upon the civilized treatment accorded to him in communities north of Mason and Dixon's Line. The facts, unfortunately, give little cause for condescension or pride. The Negro is still pretty much a second-class citizen all over the country, and the whole concept of civil rights continues to be largely a dream to men and women who are colored. Much progress has been made in the past twenty-five years — and this progress has by no means been confined to the North. Nevertheless, conditions in the North are still, as we shall see, very far from ideal. I am reporting on those conditions, not out of any desire to aggravate racial feelings, but only to set the record straight. What I have to say is directed primarily at the millions of complacent white folk in the big Northern cities who are totally unaware of any color problem in their midst. The Southerners, at least, know they have a problem.

A survey of Jim Crow in the North might logically begin with New York. No state of the union draws Southern migrants more magnetically than New York. The Southern Negro has heard of the state's civil-rights laws, of its cosmopolitanism, of its reputation for being liberal. He knows that when he gets to New York he will be putting the hated Jim Crow laws and "For Colored" signs behind him. What he finds, however, are other forms of discrimination — more subtle, not sanctified by state law, but nevertheless almost inescapable.

In New York City, the supposed center of American enlightenment, he will find his choice of living quarters restricted to those in the "black ghetto." He will find that open racial discrimination is practiced in two of the major housing developments — both of which, incidentally, enjoy considerable tax exemption. Liberals asked that they be granted the exemption only on the condition that they practice "the policy of non-discrimination," but so far the courts have not held this to be necessary.

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In November 1948 he would have noted bitterly that a veterans housing project a short distance from New York City was charged with forcing "upon unwilling tenants and purchasers a racial restrictive clause" requiring them to "subscribe to a denial of fundamental democratic principles." The clause in question reads: "No dwelling shall be used or occupied except by members of the Caucasian race, but the employment and maintenance of other than Caucasian domestic servants shall be permitted." Thus, the only Negro veterans who will be allowed in the development will be maids and janitors.

This particular development happens to be insured by the Federal Housing Authority. However, protests to FHA Commissioner Franklin D. Richards have been futile. In February 1949, Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, addressed a strong protest to President Truman, and in an accompanying 4000-word brief charged that the FHA "has continued to lend full support to the perpetuation of ghettos," and that, moreover, it has stated that "it would continue to give its support to such [racially restrictive] projects." Mr. Truman did not reply. In March 1949, Thomas G. Grace, the New York State FHA Director, told a protesting group of liberals that the agency did not have the power to bring builders to terms with Negro buyers. He said that Federal approval of a mortgage could not be withdrawn

if the owner wrote into a lease or deed a clause barring occupancy to any racial, religious or national group.

Jim Crow in the North exists in the unlikeliest places. In New York City a special fact-finding committee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews reported to the mayor, not long ago, that the Brooklyn-Queens YMCA had some units which refused membership to Negroes, even though Negroes predominated in the neighborhoods of those units, and even though the need of Negroes for such facilities was desperate. The same committee reported that, despite New York's civil-rights laws, "some hotels, cabarets and eating places still find methods of preventing full use of their facilities by Negroes." The committee concluded that the discrimination "can in almost every instance, be traced back to segregation or apathy."

It is difficult to assess the practical effectiveness of New York's civil-rights laws. In December 1948 two groups investigating the city's race relations reported that one out of five New Yorkers interviewed had personally experienced job discrimination. Most experts believe that the state FEPC law is easy to circumvent, and these particular investigators reported: "Discrimination is believed to exist in all branches of industry and occupations in New York City, especially in heavy industry, public utilities and finance."

So much for New York City. In the rest of the state the situation is gen-

erally worse. It is practically impossible to find a colored clerk in a department store in Albany, and Negroes in that city are pretty well restricted in job opportunities. Negroes have also learned not to expect too much from Syracuse — not long ago a colored woman filed suit against a hotel there for turning her away. In the main, the pattern of segregation and employment discrimination is solidly fixed all throughout upper New York State, in both the urban and rural areas. It is abetted even by many labor unions,¹ and it extends even to the use of recreational facilities.

This latter question is becoming a real sore point with Negroes, many of whom live in slums and so have special need of places where they can relax. At least 95 per cent of the privately owned resorts, bathing beaches, bowling alleys and other places of public recreation in New York State do their best to keep out Negroes. The White Plains YWCA is "solving" its Negro problem by letting Negro women use its swimming pool one evening a week.

II

Historically, New England has always been regarded as the most liberal section of the country in its treatment of Negro citizens. It was the stern Puritan conscience of this area that produced the Abolitionist movement in the early nineteenth century. To-

day there is little open discrimination in New England, especially in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, where Negroes are few in numbers. However, Negroes are not wanted at most resorts in these states, and where there is any question of competition, employment opportunities for Negroes are sharply limited.

In Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, where there are more Negroes, the color bar is camouflaged but quite potent. It is only since 1940 that Negroes in these states have been able to breach the employment barrier to the extent of getting white-collar and skilled jobs. The enactment of fair-employment-practice laws in Massachusetts and Connecticut has helped appreciably.

It is easier for Negroes in New England to live where they choose than in any other section of the country, but even here there are some formidable barriers. The ghetto situation in New Haven is notorious. In Providence there are "understandings" which discourage purchases and rentals by Negroes in white areas. Some Providence realtors maintain special lists of sub-standard houses to be kept open for Negro occupancy; this procedure ensures that the colored areas will always have the worst slums.

A similar situation exists in Hartford, where it is virtually impossible for a Negro to rent a home outside the colored area. It is somewhat easier for a Negro to buy a home outright, but if word gets around that such a pur-

¹ For a detailed discussion of this touchy problem, see "Race Discrimination in Unions," by Herbert R. Northrup, in the July 1945 *MERCURY*. — THE EDITORS

chase is contemplated, pressure is often placed on bankers to withhold loans. Some Negroes find that they can buy property only if they have a white friend who is willing to act as a "front man" for them.

The pattern of Jim Crow in the North begins to emerge more clearly when we leave the comparatively enlightened regions of the Northeast and begin to consider facts and figures for the country as a whole. There is hardly a state in the whole North that can take pride in its treatment of our most abused minority.

The problem of obtaining decent housing is becoming a desperate one for Negroes all through the North and West. The decision of the U. S. Supreme Court last year to outlaw restrictive covenants was an immense help. But the battle is far from won. In Kansas, where John Brown once risked his life to help colored men, the state legislature recently passed an act specifically authorizing certain types of restrictive agreements. In Southern California, the regional office of the Anti-Defamation League has been fighting the attempts of real estate organizations in the Los Angeles area to circumvent the Supreme Court decision. The League reported recently that "a campaign of terrorism, vandalism and discrimination has begun to prevent Southern California families from enjoying [their] rights." Among the Negro victims of this campaign have been Nat ("King") Cole, the musician, who bought an \$85,000 residence; Paul R.

Williams, an eminent architect; Dr. Carl A. Dent, a Santa Monica physician who is reportedly afraid to occupy his new home; Dr. Pauline O. Roberts, who had a cross burned in front of her elegant new residence by some local patriots; and Mr. and Mrs. Ben Eustus, who were driven from their house when it was fired by vandals.

These cases are admittedly extreme, but of 55 cities outside the South reporting on residential restrictions for Negroes, there were only a few where purchases might be made with any freedom. Among these were Massillon and Columbus, in Ohio, Sacramento and San Francisco, in California, Morristown, New Jersey, and Albany and White Plains in New York. Even in these cities the privilege was almost always qualified, and purchases were usually much easier to arrange than rentals. In most other cities the black ghettos are expanding rather than disintegrating.

The school situation is also appalling in the North, where, contrary to the popular conception, there are plenty of racially segregated public schools. New Jersey and Indiana have recently abolished Jim Crow schools, but they still exist in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Arizona, New Mexico, Maryland, Missouri and the District of Columbia. Actually, because of the expansion of solid Negro urban districts, there are more segregated schools in the North than ever before.

Naturally, there is a tendency to assign Negro schoolteachers to Negro

schools, which often have sub-standard equipment and inferior curricula. In several Northern, Eastern and Western cities, no Negro teachers at all are hired. In Lansing, Michigan, the mayor answered a criticism on this score by saying that the city's schools had Negro janitors and that that was enough.

On the college level, most schools have fairly rigid Negro quotas, and Negroes who are admitted are subjected to various forms of segregation. An Amherst chapter of a student fraternity was expelled from the national organization last year for admitting a Negro to membership. When the National Interfraternity Conference met in New York City last December it postponed taking any stand on this issue for another year.

III

Things have improved somewhat since the day when Booker T. Washington commented that "in the North the Negro can spend a dollar but cannot earn it, while in the South he can earn a dollar but cannot spend it." But the employment situation is still bad in the North. A survey of 55 cities showed that in only 19 of them were Negroes employed as clerks or store salesmen. (The prejudice in this connection was least in New York City, but even here the number of such Negro employees was usually held carefully to a token half dozen or so.) The rise of closed labor unions has aggravated the problem considerably. The same survey showed that

only 10 of the 55 cities were without discriminatory unions. The worst offenders are the unions of skilled workers, but inconsistencies, evasions and run-arounds are practiced by all types.

Finding a hotel to stop at is another of the Northern Negro's considerable problems. In about half the cities of the North, Negroes are never accepted. In the others they are accepted but made to feel that they are unwelcome. As a general rule, the only way a Negro can get a hotel room is to make an advance reservation. Sometimes even this is not enough. In Springfield, Lincoln's home, it is reported that five colored state legislators cannot get accommodations at any decent hotel. In Olympia, the capital of Washington, the famous "Wings over Jordan" choir members were barred from both of the city's hotels.

All hotels in Washington, D. C., now have a rigid color bar. There is a rather unusual history to this story. In 1872 the popularly-elected District Assembly passed a stiff civil-rights law, and until past the turn of the century, Negroes were welcome in all the capital's public places. But around 1904, this law "mysteriously disappeared from the compiled statutes of the District, and cannot be found in the present codes." There is no record that it was ever repealed, but it is certainly not enforced today.

Buying a meal in the North is almost as difficult as getting a hotel room. There are probably fewer than twenty cities in the country where

Negroes are not completely barred from white-owned restaurants. Refusal is usually bold and callous; even where civil-rights laws exist, restaurant owners know that custom is with them. Negro legislators were not admitted to the Capitol Building lunchroom in Springfield until 1947, and, unless there has been a very recent change, the sixty-odd colored employees of the state of Illinois are still kept out. At the five-and-ten-cent stores in Topeka, white customers sit down to eat at the lunch counters, but Negroes must stand. At some soda fountains in that city, Negroes cannot get service whether they sit or stand.

To the widely-publicized Four Freedoms, American Negroes would like to add a fifth — Freedom of Recreation. In the event of another war, black boys may have to fight on the beaches, but neither in war nor peace are they allowed to bathe on them. Along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, from New Jersey to Mexico, there are less than half a dozen spots where Negroes may enjoy bathing privileges. Almost everywhere, mountain resorts are closed to colored people. The same applies to bowling alleys and even, in some cases, to motion-picture theatres. At this late date there are upwards of a dozen Northern cities in which Negroes are either barred from theatres or segregated in them. (The national capital, of course, is included in this list.)

An especially ugly situation developed in the Palisades Amusement

Park, which is right across the Hudson River from New York's Harlem. For the last three summers a non-violent direct-action group called New York's Committee on Racial Equality has been campaigning to break down the banning of Negroes from the swimming pool at Palisades. The Committee's pickets were rebuffed, insulted, and finally beaten up by police and jailed. In February 1948 a Federal judge ruled that the anti-discrimination provisions of the Federal Civil Rights Law did not apply to privately owned amusement parks. But finally, at the end of 1948, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the discrimination was illegal. It remains to be seen whether New Jersey's new laws, outlawing Jim Crow completely throughout the state, will be enforced and obeyed.

New Jersey's new civil-rights law forbids segregation in the state's National Guard units. New York and Connecticut have also taken this step recently, but there are still segregated units in Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, Ohio, Illinois and California. The U. S. Army controls the various State Guards, but the present administration, like its predecessors, stands solidly behind the tradition of Jim Crow in uniform.

Since the bulk of Christian churches are Jim Crow institutions, it is not surprising that the YMCA and YWCA should also be guilty of discrimination. The YWCA's record is much better than that of the YMCA, only half of whose branches accept Negro

members. And even these memberships rarely include the use of swimming pools, cafeterias or dormitories. Whenever possible, colored applicants are sweetly referred to the special Negro branches.

IV

Rabelais and Swift would have been convulsed by the prodigious effort expended in their country to prevent citizens of opposite sexes and colors from legally consummating their affection. Inasmuch as 80 per cent of American Negroes have some white blood, the reasons given for the restrictions are rather hypocritical. To prove the alleged aversion of the two races to intimate association, 29 states of the union (16 of them outside the South) have illegalized mixed marriages. The most savage penalties, as a matter of fact, are in the North. Georgia hands out a maximum sentence of one year for the offense, and Tennessee and Texas five years, but in Indiana, North Dakota and South Dakota, the rap is ten years. All 29 states refuse to recognize even those interracial marriages which have been consummated elsewhere.

Another bitter pill for the Northern Negro is the hospital situation. In general, hospitalized Negroes are segregated. In San Francisco, Los Angeles and Wilmington, Negroes are not permitted to enter hospitals unless they are prepared to pay for private rooms. In other cities the pattern of discrimination works differently. Trenton, Columbus, and

Harrisburg *insist* that Negroes go into the wards; they are not allowed private rooms. Kansas City, Missouri, bars Negroes from all hospitals except two: one a municipally-owned Jim Crow institution, the other a private hospital owned by Negroes. St. Louis bars them from some hospitals and segregates them in others. Fort Wayne segregates them in all hospitals but one. Even in large cities like New York and Chicago, there are various forms of subtle and exasperating bias.

Three winters ago, a Washington, D. C., colored woman in the throes of childbirth and unable to reach a city hospital was rushed to a church-supported institution. She was refused admission with firm Christian resolution, and her baby was delivered on the sidewalk. The somewhat contrite staff then made partial amends by supplying the mother and child with a covering sheet until the city ambulance took them away.

In this respect, as in others, the Negro from Washington, D. C., is heavily penalized. He must either accept space in a segregated ward or travel to Philadelphia or New York. Aside from Freeman's Hospital, a Negro institution, the nation's capital has only two private or semi-private rooms available to colored people. It is ironical to recall that sixty years ago the eleven hospitals in Washington served all races equally. Today three of the twelve private institutions totally exclude Negroes, and the remainder segregate them.

The Negro who wants to be a doc-

tor finds difficulties in his way all along the line. He will have difficulty finding a school that will accept him and more difficulty finding a hospital in which he can gain interne experience. (However, Negro nurses are freely accepted in most hospitals.)

The crowning indignity to the Northern Negro is the treatment he receives from the proprietors of snooty cemeteries and mortuaries; even in death he cannot escape from

Jim Crow. However, it remained for Washington, D. C., to reach the depths of indecency. There, according to report, "a dog cemetery has erected a color bar against the burial of dogs belonging to colored people. In announcing this policy, the owner stated that he assumed the dogs would not object, but he was afraid his white customers would."

Apparently even a white dog is barred if its owner is black!

SIGRID'S SONG

BY BERNICE KENYON

Fire-weed, saxifrage, bee-balm and feverfew,
Thistles at their flying, and tansy and yarrow,
Gather them together to delight you and comfort you
With beauty, and duty, and hope for tomorrow.

Nothing lasts as flowers last, with simple form and savour;
Nothing shines as flowers shine, although their time be brief.
Soapwort and sorrel, they cannot last forever,
But they can bring you happiness and never any grief.

White spurge and queen's lace and tumble-weed and clover,
Snow-on-the-mountain and laurel in the dale,
Tell them and count them oh many times over,
For day falls and life fails if loveliness should fail.

THE FOLKLORE OF COLLEGES

BY RICHARD M. DORSON

WHEN she comes tripping by, stone lions will bark. A Revolutionary War cannon will fire out. Two facing statues will solemnly dismount from their pedestals, walk to the center of the courtyard, and clasp hands in congratulation. A series of boulders, delicately balanced atop each other by nature's art, will suddenly collapse. When she gazes their way, the Flat-top Mountains will turn purple with rage.

On college campuses throughout the country these various signs will greet her achievement. For she will be the first virgin to graduate from the University. One report states that the teetering rocks on the University of Alabama campus did once topple to the earth, when an undefiled soul passed by. It belonged to a young man.

The variations are legion, but the theme is national, for undergraduates from Florida to Oregon inherit the same general traditions, adjusted of course to local deans and professors and coaches. We usually associate folklore with cowboys and lumberjacks,

but college students also tell stories and sing songs that they learn purely by word of mouth.

Consider for instance the gags about the absent-minded or eccentric professor. Every college and university in the land possesses some odd faculty member whose behavior makes legends. At Exeter I remember hearing tales about an extremely cross-eyed Latin master, whom we called "Squint" among ourselves. Enraged in class one time, Squint glared at a squirming student and roared, "Look out, I've got my eye on you!" "Which eye?" the student asked innocently. In another irate mood Squint commanded, "You in the back row, stand up," transfixing a malefactor with his wrathful gaze. Thereupon six students stood up. I always accepted these stories as gospel until recently, when I began to investigate the ways of college folklore.

At Harvard a number of anecdotes cluster around the historian, Albert Bushnell Hart, who kept pottering about the library after his retirement. Folklore says that from force of habit

RICHARD M. DORSON, who teaches American history at Michigan State College, will be remembered by MERCURY readers for "The Lynching of the McDonald Boys," which appeared last June, and for "The Story of Sam Patch," which appeared the preceding June. He is the author of *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow*, a collection of New England folk-tales.

he took careful notes on all the books he handled each afternoon, and then tore up all the notes before going home. A curious librarian noticed him browsing in the fine-arts section for several days, and examined the books Hart had been using. Around every nude figure he found a penciled circle — proof of Hart's ever-youthful outlook. Resurrected to present a paper at the installation of a high school principal, Hart (still according to the folklore) dutifully read the speech his secretary had typed for him, including the two carbon copies she had forgotten to remove.

Everyone knows that professors live in another world, and campus yarns prove the point. A University of Texas professor of ichthyology, walking across the campus with a colleague, was greeted cordially by a student, whom he answered impersonally. "How come you don't know the name of that friendly student?" asked the colleague. "I have made it a point," replied the ichthyologist, "never to learn the names of my students. Whenever I remember a student I forget a fish."

College folklore cherishes the tale of Professor Brown's visit to Professor Smith. The evening wore on, the guest showed no signs of leaving, and finally Brown said, "Harry, I'm awfully sorry but it's 2 A.M. and I must ask you to go. I have an 8 o'clock class in the morning." "Bill," said Harry, "you're in my house."

They also tell for true the story of the University of Illinois professor

who invited a number of his associates to dinner. When the first guest showed up in a tuxedo, the host's wife motioned him upstairs to do a quick change into formal dress. The other guests arrived, but the host did not reappear. At length the frantic hostess excused herself and slipped up to his room. The professor snored in bed. Taking off his clothes to change, he had unconsciously put on his pajamas and gone to sleep.

II

The classic absent-minded-professor story concerns the pundit who drove his car to a destination, took a train back, and bawled out his wife for not meeting him at the station with the auto. A variation on this theme recently appeared in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, which reported that Professor William J. Cunningham, holder of the chair in transportation at the Business School, had dropped his wife at a mail box and then continued on his journey. Some time later he noticed her absence and informed the police. But I have heard the same story told on a mathematics professor at the University of Michigan, whose wife went to the rest room when he stopped for gas, and came out to find him gone. Worse yet, she had newly arrived in this country and could speak no English.

Professors are important, campus-wise, chiefly because they give grades. How they arrive at their decisions, folklore alone knows. The old story, of course, is that the prof throws the

bluebooks down the stairs, and gives As to those which land at the foot, Fs to those at the head. Or he throws them at the ceiling, and whichever stick receive an A. A Harvard tale has chemistry professor J. P. Cooke distributing his papers to his family; he gave the Es himself, his son-in-law the Ds, and so on up to the baby, who, being the slowest, marked the As. From 'way back I recall the tale of the professor who customarily placed his papers in two heaps, representing the good and the bad students. When he came across an error by a good student he disregarded it, saying, "He knows better than that." When he saw a correct answer by a poor student he marked it wrong, saying, "He couldn't have meant that."

Examinations, the source of grades, provide more folktales. Around Harvard they still talk about Robert Benchley's feat in handling a question in American diplomatic history on rights to the Newfoundland fisheries. Benchley knew nothing about the matter, so he wrote, "This question has long been discussed from the American and British points of view, but has anyone ever considered the viewpoint of the fish?" He proceeded to give it, and was awarded, appropriately enough, a C. The chairman of the University of Minnesota's history department told me of a coed who showed up at the final exam with a few cocktails under her belt. She thought the questions looked a little strange, but went at them with a will. Some weeks later she received a

grade of B for a course in American political science, in which she was not enrolled, and a statement of incomplete for the course in American literature in which she belonged.

A colleague of mine claims this is gospel. He caught a student cheating on an examination, and duly reported him to the dean. Ordinarily this meant expulsion, but the student had a relative on the governing board, and was let off with a reprimand. Some years later his professor entered a bank to cash a check, and saw this youth in the front office, scrutinizing the books. He held the post of state bank examiner.

III

There is a sheaf of stories about the dumb star athlete. His coach instructs him to sit next to the class grind for the crucial exam. Forty-nine questions the two answer identically. On the fiftieth the brilliant student writes, "I don't know the answer to this," so the athlete puts down, "I don't know the answer either." Then they tell of the football star who received such encomiums in the press that the dean asked the coach, "Won't all this praise go to his head?" "No," said the coach, "he can't read."

As the prof is lowly and comical, so the coach is lofty and admired. Which college president was it whose salary was raised to make it equal that of the football coach? Anyway, tales constantly spring up of coaches' magic. For instance, Adolph Rupp, the wizard basketball coach at the

University of Kentucky, lays his luck to the fact that the door to his office is exactly six feet high. If an ambitious freshman enters without stooping, Rupp doesn't even bother to stand up and shake his hand. Bernie Bierman of the University of Minnesota uses a similar technique in culling football talent. On a scouting trip he drives through a farm area until he comes to a young fellow plowing. He asks him, "Where is the University?" and if the young man points the direction with his hand, Bierman drives on. If, however, he lifts his plow to show the direction, Bierman stops to explain how attractive attendance at the University could be. This plow-lifting stunt, incidentally, is told on several European folk heroes.

Deans, too, grow into legends, and the Dean of Women leads all the rest. Her advice to new coeds echoes across the country. Never wear patent leather shoes on a date; they reflect. Never wear a red dress; it inflames. Don't eat olives; they're passion pills. Always carry along a telephone book (or a newspaper, or a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post*) in case your date asks you to sit on his lap. The bright street lamps erected in front of the dorms are known as Dean X's birth-control lights. A coed must turn the picture of her boy-friend to the wall before undressing at night.

In spite of these warnings, coeds do manage to have some fun. Just becoming a coed involves certain traditional procedures that the Lady Dean would be horrified to learn

about. A mild one is that at Michigan State College, where a girl becomes a coed when kissed in the shadow of Beaumont Tower at the stroke of midnight. At Purdue the requirements are more demanding. Girl kisses boy under the arch of the clock tower at Havoline Hall, on the first stroke of the chimes at midnight. Then both race across campus to John Purdue's grave and commence more serious business before the last chimes strike.

Believed tales, or legends, can be found in college folklore. A macabre one that turns up in various forms is known as the Fatal Fraternity Initiation. The pledge is tied to a chair, blindfolded, and told that his arm is to be cut open. The back of the blade is pressed against his skin, while a wet towel is hung over a chair and drips into a bucket, to simulate the bleeding. The actives tell the pledge they will return later. When they come back, the boy is dead.

Sometimes the pledge is led blindfolded to the edge of a supposed cliff, and dropped two feet to die of shock. Or he is to be singed with a hot poker, which is pressed against raw meat at the same time that a piece of ice is held on the pledge's skin. He smells the burning meat, thinks it is his own flesh, and crumples up dead. In a sorority initiation, the pledge was blindfolded and told to shake the hand of a dead man. The actives thrust a pickled hand they had swiped from the laboratory into her hand, then ran out of the room and locked the door. In the morning they found

their sister with snow white hair, nibbling on the pickled hand.

Campus cries form still another aspect of collegiate tradition. At Harvard "Rinehart" rallies the mob for action, and thus memorializes a lonesome alumnus. Poor Rinehart, lacking friends, would go beneath his window and call out his own name, to make the neighbors think him popular. Some say that he actually was popular. At the University of California the cry is "Pedro," and the explanations are myriad. Pedro is the ghost of a student who dropped dead from the shock of getting all As, and now assists cramming undergrads when they call him in their distress. Or he is the ghost of an Indian whose tepee was razed to build the library, and who still hangs angrily about. Or again he is the date of a girl who found herself locked out of the dorm and called after him in despair. Anyway, "Pedro" voices the soul yearnings of Berkeley bookworms on soft spring nights.

IV

Anyone who would penetrate the minds of American collegians must know their songs. The undergraduate inherits a spirited grab-bag of folk-song from upperclassmen, and sings them lustily at dorm bull sessions, beer busts, fraternity and sorority parties, or any other convivial occasion. The tunes are standard Tin Pan Alley stuff latched on to parodies and originals. The texts rise up spontaneously and spread mysteriously. Some classics seem to be familiar to college

students everywhere; last fall, coming back from Europe on a ship carrying fourteen hundred assorted students, I saw casual groups form on deck and join into lyric after lyric without benefit of songbooks or prompters. Most of the songs wouldn't look well in print anyway.

The *leitmotif* in college balladry is love, but not Tin Pan Alley or Hollywood brands of love. Dimpled, cherubic coeds sing the praises of an earthy, physical passion, of an insatiable sex mania. One group of their songs twines around Wicked Women and their lures: Flamin' Mamie, "a love scorcher and a human torture"; Mimi the College Widow, who taught the boys anatomy; Gumdrop Sal, the friendly Eskimo Queen, whose husband stayed out all night, in a land where the nights are six months long. But the chief beguiler, head and fins above the rest, is Minnie the Mermaid:

Many's the night I spent with Minnie the
Mermaid,

Down at the bottom of the sea.

She forgot her morals, down among the
corals,

Gee but she was good to me.

Many's the night when the pale moon was
shining,

Down on her bungalow.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,

Two twin beds and only one of them
mussed.

Oh it's easy to see she's not my mother,
'Cause my mother's forty-nine.

And it's easy to see she's not my sister,
'Cause I'd never give my sister such a
helluva good time.

And it's easy to see she's not my sweetie,
 'Cause my sweetie's too refined.
 She's just a cute little kid who never knew
 what she did,
 She's just a personal friend of mine.

In reverse plot stands the well known fate of "The Lady in Red," begging a night's shelter under the bar. The moral to over-ambitious coeds: beware the ways of college men, "and how they come — and go."

The drinking songs assist men of mettle to drain their cups, stimulating them with sagas of mighty drunks, or providing due pauses for gulping purposes. Thus the popular Chug-A-Lug Song requires the rapid downing of a mugfull of beer upon the completion of each verse, while the celebrated Whiffenpoof Song hymns a stately salute to the tavern hall.

There are various apostrophes to beer, gin, rum and whisky, and an epic ballad about an Irish wake:

The night that Paddy Murphy died
 I never shall forget,
 The whole damn town got stinkin' drunk,
 And some ain't sober yet.
 The only thing they did that night
 That filled my heart with fear,
 They took the ice right off the corpse
 And put it in the beer.

Chorus

That's how they showed their respect for
 Paddy Murphy,
 That's how they showed their honor and
 their pride,
 Ho-ho-ho, that's how they showed their
 respect for Paddy Murphy,
 On the night that Paddy died.

When they finished with the beer they
 started on the corpse.

They took him from his coffin and put
 him on the porch,
 And then they went next door and stole a
 neighbor's pig
 And brought it back to Paddy's house
 and tied it on his leg.

A college story about Paddy Murphy says that he came to the States from County Cork, spent his life cheating on, and beating up, his wife, and died of acute alcoholism. His relatives assembled for a handsome wake. They duly passed the body and kissed the forehead, when cousin Maureen felt a movement and screamed to Mrs. Murphy, "He's hot, he's hot!" "Hot or cold, he goes out in the morning," said the grieving widow.

At Northwestern University the alcoholic exploits of Paddy Murphy receive each fall appropriate funeral rites, sponsored by the local Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter. A procession three blocks long files from the chapter house to the outskirts of Evanston, the marchers festooned in green and tearfully draining beer bottles as they follow the corpse, itself composed of dead beer bottles, with a red lamp bulb for a nose. Upon reaching the grave, which has been dug by pledges, the mourners light candles and break into the Paddy Murphy song. An active attired in priestly robes renders the service, paying tribute to Paddy's inspiring and heroic drunks. En route to the grave the Sigma Chis attempt to purloin the corpse, and so seriously do the SAEs defend their honor that in 1945 one circled the procession in

a plane to warn his fellow-actives of the enemy's approach.

The group loyalties of college folk get expressed in odes of sentiment and corny humor to fraternities and sororities, and to the alma mater. Serious songs of love and devotion are used to serenade the newly pinned coed, or to entertain a visiting sorority. They crawl with romantic clichés. But the undergrad has no scruples about parodying himself, and will compose such a slurring "Ode by a Sigma Chi" as this:

The girl of my dreams has bobbed her hair
And dyed it a fiery red.

She drinks, she smokes, and she tells dirty jokes,

She hasn't a brain in her head.

The girl of my dreams is a cigarette fiend,
She drinks more booze than I.

But the girl of my dreams is not what she seems,

She's the sweetheart of six other guys.

One must add to the stories and songs such other folk matter as the slang of the campus, and the festivals and customs that perforate college life. The enterprising folklorist doesn't need to journey into the back hills to scoop up tradition. He can set up his recording machine in the smokeshop or the college grill.

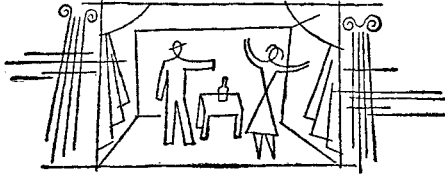
JUST BEFORE DAYLIGHT

BY ROBERT HILLYER

Just before daylight, when our dreams whirl round
Like bubbles flickering before they burst,
Sweet is our waking, although slowly nursed
Back to the real world by sight and sound.
In such a dream I gained what from the first
I had desired: the prisoner unbound,
Leaping to freedom and delight, yet found
New bonds of shyness in joys unrehearsed.
I dreamed the dreadful aftermath. You lay
Breathless and crumpled; yet with courteous grace,
Guessing the darker void of my dismay,
You spoke no word of what had taken place,
But lightly with one finger touched my face,
Then rose, and with a half-smile, stole away.

THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



CLINICAL NOTES

Hollywood. What exactly is it about Hollywood that takes such severe toll of the majority of the writers who go out there? Most of the reasons have already been set down by various analysts, all of them in their way convincing. But I think there is another that is usually overlooked and that is that most of the writers who respond to the lure of the moving pictures are inferior men to begin with and are accordingly unable to preserve what small independence and measure of quality they may conceivably possess. It is ridiculous to suppose that any first-rate man and first-rate writer would inevitably be befouled by Hollywood, save he were to devote himself to it over a considerable period. But first-rate men and first-rate writers are not in their very natures tempted by the greasy riches that the place offers and have preferred to remain this side of that bogus paradise. It has been and is the intrinsically cheap boys who have fallen for the mirage and who subse-

quently have been lost in trying to get out of the desert wastes.

There is, too, I think, a second reason. Even the most upright of writers can not for long immerse himself in a pulp mill without having some of the pulp cling to him. This is every bit as true of New York or anywhere else as it is of Hollywood, yet Hollywood is always singled out as the sole culprit. A man can no more, even deliberately and with tongue in cheek, too long write trash for money and not be polluted, however strong he may be, than he can sleep in a contagious disease ward and not be infected. There may be miraculous exceptions, but they remain exceptions. A writer in need of funds may undertake a low writing job to get them. He may even undertake two such jobs. But if he undertakes three, and in quick succession, he is on the road to oblivion, since, like narcotics, three are bound to lead to four, four to five, and so on.

Hollywood is the worst of the dope peddlers because it sells its opium under a false label. Its customers pull at the pipe in the belief that it is harm-

less and, when finally they give it up, find that they are still helplessly dreaming the former delusions. They drop belladonna into their eyes to rid them of their mistiness; they eat oranges to get the arid taste out of their mouths; and they paint their cheeks to hide the yellowish pallor. But they walk stooped and uncertainly the paths they once erectly trod.

It is characteristic of one-time writers for the stage who have hied themselves screenward and, when things have no longer gone well for them, have crawled back to the theatre, to endeavor to re-ingratiate themselves by one means or another. Sometimes they seek to persuade us that all along they were singly devoted to the theatre and went to Hollywood merely out of curiosity, much as one would go to observe the doings in a cancer clinic. To emphasize their contention, they write pieces for the newspapers or give out interviews in which they denounce the place and everything connected with it in virulent terms. Sometimes they take the other tack and hope to convince us that they remain superior to Hollywood by affecting a paternal air of condescension and generously allowing that it has its good points and is usually derogated only by such men as, unlike themselves, have been beaten by it. And at other times they show at least a symptom of some intelligence by remaining mum, otherwise than to state that the big money they got there feels very good in their pockets. But in most of the cases the

sound is of a loud whistling in the dark. They are clearly ashamed of themselves and wish to re-establish their pride, that is, if ever they really had any. They are, with few exceptions, Enoch Ardens returned home in rich raiment, but with their talents in tatters.

Tragedy. In a preface to his published play, *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller goes to considerable lengths to justify his belief that the tragedy of the little man may be quite as exalted dramatically and artistically as that of the classic kings and emperors. He need not have gone to so much trouble. It may be, but there are two points which, seemingly in the interests of his own play, he chooses to overlook. Save the little man have something of a mind, which Mr. Miller's protagonist has not, his tragedy, while it may be deeply moving, is in finality without universal size and is like the experience we suffer in contemplating on the highways a run-over and killed dog, undeniably affecting but without any profound significance. The tragedy, accordingly, becomes not so much that of a full-winged human being as merely that of a mindless clod, at once pitiful and touching but lost from the outset in the maelstrom of inevitable circumstance. And his struggle against his surroundings becomes not cumulatively holding but obviously foredoomed, since there is no share of intellect even modestly to assist him. Great tragedy is the trag-

edy of man's mind in strong conflict with the stronger fates; minor tragedy that of mindless man already beaten by them.

The second point is the language in which tragedy is written. The fall of kings calls for a splendor of prose or poetry, otherwise it may be quite as unimpressive as the fall of little men. But the tragedy of the little man, to be as impressive as that of a king, calls as well for such treatment. It is not the story of and the reasons for a ruler's tragic end that remain in our hearts and memories but the flights of language through which they are related. Commonplace language, though it may be exactly suited to the tragedy of the underdog, may make for first-rate theatre but scarcely for first-rate and overwhelming drama.

In defense of his point of view, Mr. Miller concludes, "It is time, I think, that we who are without kings took up this bright thread of our history and followed it to the only place it can possibly lead in our time — the heart and spirit of the average man."

We are not without kings, though they may not wear the royal purple. We have men of heart and spirit — and also mind. They are, or may be, the meat of important tragedy. The average man's, the common man's, tragedy, save it be laid over and lifted above itself with the deceptive jewels of English speech can be no more in the temple of dramatic art than the pathetic picture of a lovable idiot lifting his small voice against the hurricane of the world.

Acting. Though it would be an unusual critic who would admit it, appraisal of actors and acting is grounded much more on a critic's personal predispositions and prejudices than on any strict technical knowledge. The familiar layman remark, "I may not know much about art, but I know what I like," should, if the critic were entirely truthful, have its counterpart in "I may not know much about acting, but I know what I feel." Since, as everyone is aware, the emotional reactions of the men whose profession is criticism are as different and as variously eccentric as are those of any other men, save alone such as are themselves actors, an actor's performance naturally impresses them in different ways. This, as everyone also knows, accounts for the diversity of opinion in the cases of even the very best actors. So far, platitude.

But on at least one point there should properly be some critical agreement, and that is that, though the actor under review may plainly have mastered all the technical facets of his craft, it is frequently his personal and physical shortcomings that make them go largely for naught. It is thus that an actor who obviously knows much more about his work than some other actor fails to interest and affect his audience as does a lesser colleague. I am not speaking of physical looks, though they surely have their place also, since that is altogether too facile a comment and one that has small value in critical consideration. What I am referring

to is vocal equipment that, however ably trained, remains still out of the picture which the actor tries to create, and body which, however also ably trained, yet blemishes the picture further by virtue of its inability fully to accommodate it.

More and more, in another direction, it is this body movement, or rather lack of it, that diminishes the effect of so much present day acting. Nor is it entirely the actor's fault. Modern drama consists largely in speech rather than physical action; the emphasis is on the written word rather than, as in the farther past, on movement and "business"; and the result has been the call for acting that stops below the shoulders and confines itself mostly to the area above them. Our stage has accordingly become not a place for acting involving corporeal activity but a place for labial and facial feature, and in the process our actors have helplessly become less and less actors in the old sense than mere ambling reciters. What physical movement they are permitted is not the dispensation of their playwrights but of their directors, and it is consequently an artificial imposition upon them rather than part and parcel of the nature and demands of the plays.

One would think that actors who have had prolonged screen training and who have transferred their activities to the stage would, whatever the nature of the dramatic occasion, be much less constrained in this direction, since the motion pictures by

their very name are supposed to be dedicated to physical movement much more than to vocal. But, with the passing of the silent pictures, which necessarily had to rely most greatly on such movement, and with the appearance of the talking films, the screen began to imitate the stage and to make movement secondary to speech. And what ensued was for the most part an exaggeration of stage constriction, with an actor's play of features frozen into what is colloquially known as a "dead pan" and with his body — except maybe for the few minutes when the police chase him or the director inserts a sequence in which he, or more usually his stunt stand-in, jumps on a horse and races after an ingénue being kidnapped in an automobile — compelled into the corpse-like rigidity that movie audiences interpret either as a token of aristocratic birth or of a strong, silent, and often sinister mentality.

Richard III. Though it has always seemed to me that, given a vocal equipment of some range, a patience in the matter of makeup, and even a faint degree of intelligence, the Richard III rôle does not impose upon an actor's fair account of himself any need for divine help, there has long been a pro and con critical to-do over its performance almost equal to that apportioned Hamlet. Hazlitt worked himself up into a lather over Kean's Richard simply because in the scene with Lady Anne he did not in leaning against the pillar "go through exactly

the same regular evolution of graceful attitudes" and because he changed his manner of resting on the point of his sword before he retires to his tent. Yet this same critic then worked himself up into such a state of delight that he reported "the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out after his sword is taken from him had a preternatural and terrific grandeur." Forster on the contrary unqualifiedly hailed Kean's "exquisite art" and made the hailing the occasion for a savage assault on Forrest's interpretation of the rôle, largely because of the "most oppressively gilded dress" with which he adorned his person, because of the "tremendous power of his lungs," which he compared with "the noise of artillery," and because he shook his sword after withdrawing it from Henry's death-wound.

Lewes complained of both Charles Kean's and G. V. Brooke's early performances that "they roared and stamped, and stamped and roared, spluttering and perspiring" and "flew into a passion, and that of the most furious and stentorian kind upon the slightest provocation, indeed without provocation at all." Kean, he observed, "seemed to me the very worst actor, out of a barn, playing great parts," though seeing him some years later he qualified his finding somewhat by allowing that the actor had renounced the stampings though "he still manifested his abiding fault—that minute and detailed misconception of the meaning of the phrases he has to utter." He concluded, however,

that compared with the performance of Brooke, "I must pronounce it great." Leigh Hunt, nevertheless, considered Brooke excellent in the rôle.

The to-do has not abated in more modern times. Of Irving's Richard, Shaw wrote that he played the scene with Lady Anne "as if he were a Houndsditch salesman cheating a factory girl over a pair of second-hand stockings" and concluded that he should either cast the play to suit his acting or else modify his acting to suit the cast. Of Richard Mansfield, several critics argued that he seemed to think he was playing not Richard but Quasimodo, while several others considered his performance a fairly handsome one. Robert Mantell's Richard was contended by some to be altogether too boisterous and by others altogether too sneakingly *piano*. And so it has been with Hampden, Barrymore, Coulouris, Whorf, and the others who have thrust a bustle up their backs and smeared shoe-blackening on their eyes in their pursuit of classical glory.

What the exact truth of the matter is, I do not presume to say. All I say is what I have said before: that, despite a fury of criticism that has not only matched but surpassed some of Richard's own, it seems to me that, given the minor attributes earlier mentioned, an actor, whether good or bad, can no more entirely fail in being impressive to the majority of lay theatregoers in the rôle than he can fail in that of Falstaff or Fancourt Babberley.

HUNTINGTON CAIRNS, FEDERAL CENSOR

BY JEROME H. SPINGARN

PROBABLY no nation in history has been more antagonistic to censorship than our own; but probably no censor has functioned with fewer complaints than the gentleman who has been official censor of the United States for the last fifteen years. Operating under the authority of the Tariff Act, he is charged with barring obscene foreign books and art from our ports. Yet few Americans are even aware of his existence. The sensible censor who has so discreetly performed his duties is no blue-nosed bigot with a long pokey umbrella, but a cherubic-faced Baltimore lawyer and scholar, named Huntington Cairns, who can often be seen with a paper-bound French novel under his arm. Cairns takes a modest view of his powers and has thus managed to please everyone except a few militant watch-and-warders. Indeed, not one of his decisions has ever been appealed to the courts.

It was not ever thus, however. In 1934, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau suffered the acute embarrassment of seeing his Customs Bureau ridiculed in print and

trounced in court for attempting to exclude James Joyce's widely acclaimed *Ulysses* under the obscenity provisions of the Tariff Act. He decided then and there that Customs needed a special adviser on obscenity, a lawyer who had also read a few books. He turned to two of his top legal aides for suggestions, and since they were both from Baltimore, they thought immediately of young Huntington Cairns. Cairns was known locally both as a lawyer and as a book reviewer for the Baltimore *Sun*. From the day he took office, censorship ceased to be a problem to the Treasury.

In order to familiarize himself with the routine, Cairns sought out the guard who had first seized *Ulysses*, and tried to learn why he considered it obscene. The guard said that he had quickly approved the first crate of volumes because the books were valued at \$15, an obvious mark of respectability. But when they started coming through in large quantities, he grew suspicious, opened a volume and found "the filthiest words I ever saw." His superiors at the port shared

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his abhorrence, and the books were seized and destroyed.

About a day later, a rather attractive young actress arrived in the country with a copy of *Ulysses* in her baggage. When the customs officials returned her bags, the offensive publication had been removed. She returned to protest. "Lady, we can't let you take that book into the country," she was told. "It's dirty."

The actress responded that she had read it on shipboard, and didn't agree at all; would they, she asked, be so good as to show her what they objected to?

"Lady, are you married?" the guard asked. She admitted that she was not, at the moment.

"Well then, we can't even let you see the book."

Since Cairns' advent, this sort of thing has been stopped. If an inspector thinks an importation is obscene, he passes it on to the Collector of the Port. The Collector can overrule him and return it to its owner, or else mail it on to the Customs Bureau in Washington, which sends it over to Cairns for an expert opinion. Cairns inspects it and decides whether it may pass or whether it must be forfeited to the public executioner. His powers are purely advisory, but the Customs Bureau invariably follows his recommendations.

The Customs guards are not too fond of this arrangement, which deprives them of considerable power and some interesting homework. But experience has shown that, despite their

confidence in their ability to spot the obscene, they can't be relied upon to tell a French postcard from a Vatican mural.

II

Section 305 of the Tariff Act, which prohibits the admission of obscene material, does not define the word "obscene"; that is Cairns' job. He studied the precedents, wrote learned articles on obscenity, and finally decided that an obscene object is one that belongs in "the class of sexual stimulants which is not customarily brought into public view." He finds that the concept of what is obscene in this country changes from year to year, so he maintains no *Index Expurgatorius*. Each book is judged individually at the time of its arrival. Our national tastes are constantly widening, he finds, and books are being printed this year that wouldn't have been printed when he first took the job fifteen years ago. So Censor Cairns makes a point of reading new books and book reviews, as well as court decisions on obscenity, to discover what range of discussion a writer is tacitly allowed in our society. The Kinsey Report, for example, is read and discussed in ultra-respectable places, although its subject matter and its frank approach would have been regarded as offensive just a short while ago. On the other hand, *Memoirs of Hecate County*, which received critical acclaim when it was first published, is now banned in New York, with the concurrence

of the United States Supreme Court.

The fact that an importation was not considered obscene in the country of its origin does not necessarily save it from seizure. In India, for example, the outside walls of some public places are decorated with highly artistic and realistic scenes of sexual intercourse. Cairns says these are not obscene in India, by his definition, but they are here, and he does not admit photographs of this sculpture.

In Japan it is the custom to print "pillow books" for the purpose of educating brides-to-be. These are detailed manuals of sex instruction, with highly colored and realistic pictures illustrating the varied methods and postures of sexual enjoyment which are considered essential to a beginner's repertory. A Japanese consul and his wife brought one of these with them to this country some years back. It was beautifully printed, and was cherished by the consul's wife as a family heirloom which had been handed down from mother to daughter, on the eve of marriage, for several generations. But Cairns was forced, under the law, to exclude it on the ground that it would certainly be looked upon as obscene in this country.

Most of the items that Cairns finds it necessary to condemn are objects of extreme crudity. Once, when he was having dinner with a cabinet member and his wife, the lady said that she was thoroughly familiar with erotic literature and didn't think that censorship was ever justified.

"Have you ever seen a really obscene book?" Cairns asked.

"Sure, *Forever Amber*," she said.

"Well then, my dear friend," said Cairns, "you just don't have the faintest idea of the sort of publications we deal with."

Ninety-five per cent of the material that crosses Cairns' desk consists of miserably printed and badly written books and pornographic pictures which he can ban without hesitation. Typical titles are: *Wild Lust*, *Nudists at Play*, *Raw Passion*. They are illustrated by photographs or drawings portraying grossly exaggerated orgies and organs. It is obvious to the most casual observer that their only purpose is to excite sexual impulses or to shock sensibilities. There are only a limited number of orifices in the human body, but Cairns finds that the ingenuity of pornographers is always finding new approaches to them. Perhaps the highest degree of ingenuity is to be found in the Asiatic importations. The bulk of the trade, however, comes from Spain and South America, and these publications reach the zenith of absolute grossness; they are entirely without any element of art. Oddly enough, Cairns reports, while this material runs the gamut from sadism to sodomy, it is always bisexual; he has never seen an attempted import of homosexual obscenity. He is constantly astonished, too, by the prominence of some of the collectors to whom these imports are addressed; they include many well known residents of Hollywood and Park Avenue.

Frequently the questionable importations are illustrated versions of the classics. These are usually admitted. But more difficult questions arise when an obscene work has some pretensions to artistic value. Once Cairns read three lives of Alfred de Musset to help him determine whether Musset's *Gamiani*, considered as a whole, was obscene. He finally decided that it was when he found a letter from Musset to his publisher announcing that it was his intention in this book to outdo the pornographic books then on the market.

Customs officers recently sent him some new statues by Jacob Epstein which made prominent display of genital apparatus. Applying his definition, and considering the statuary on display in reputable American parks and museums, he ordered immediate admission. Water colors by D. H. Lawrence were similarly passed.

Sometimes pornographic books are disguised as scientific texts. When he gets a questionable book of this sort, Cairns passes it on to medical men for an opinion.

Some of the works of Henry Miller, the *avant-garde* favorite, have also raised close questions. So far, Cairns has always excluded Miller's books. He says that the Paris editions are much more obscene than those published here, which, he says, he would not have barred. Miller is one of the very few well known modern writers whom Cairns has consistently banned; nevertheless, the two men are warm friends. When he was stranded abroad

at the beginning of the last war, Miller sent a telegraphic appeal for assistance to the literary censor, who personified to him the power and authority of his homeland. Cairns generously arranged a steamship passage home and advanced the necessary funds. On a recent Western trip, Cairns found Miller living in straitened circumstances on the outskirts of Hollywood, and rounded up a wardrobe of well-tailored clothing for him from the closets of a motion picture set. When Miller was visiting Washington, he stayed at Cairns' apartment. Cairns says that it is particularly painful for him to have to bar Miller's books, because he respects him deeply as an artist and thinks he "has written some of the best pages of American prose."

III

It was as a Baltimore lawyer that Cairns had his first contact with Customs censorship. A bookseller had imported George Moore's *Daphnis and Chloë*, and it had been sequestered as obscene at the Customs House. Cairns conducted a successful defense which established an important legal precedent. What he remembers best about the case, however, is the customs inspector who decided that the book was obscene. Cairns called him to the witness stand and asked him if he had ever read Chaucer. "I read his books in high school." "Is he alive or dead?" "I'm not sure," said the inspector.

Cairns' great passion is Baltimore,

his native city. He goes back at least once a month to lunch on sea food with his lawyer friends, visit his mother, and see some literary cronies — H. L. Mencken and A. D. Emmart of the *Baltimore Sun*, Joseph Hergeheimer, and Joe Lally, who does book reviews for the *New Yorker*. After graduation from high school in Baltimore, Cairns went directly to the University of Maryland Law School, earning his way through by working in the British Consulate. He keenly felt the lack of a college education, and began to study philosophy intensively, deriving particular inspiration from Bertrand Russell, Morris R. Cohen and Alfred North Whitehead. When he later began to practice law with the firm of Piper, Carey and Hall, his friends observed in him "an obsession to be a well-rounded man." He resolved to work as energetically at avocational pursuits as at the bar. He played chess until he was able to win from champions, then put it aside for "Goh," a Chinese game which is infinitely more complicated. Once, to assist a psychologist friend with an experiment, he dosed himself with peyote, a drug which has the curious effect of producing highly colored images before the eyes. It was used by the Aztecs to heighten the impressionability of worshipers at religious ceremonies. He wrote articles for law journals, did a textbook on Maryland taxation at the request of the State Tax Commission, and became a member in good standing of the local

booksy conclaves, which at the time were presided over by V. F. Calverton. Calverton, an arch-libertarian, took to ribbing him mercilessly after he became a censor. Cairns was somewhat sensitive about this; until Calverton died, he never realized that it was all a good-natured joke. But at the funeral it developed that Calverton's dying wish had been to have Cairns deliver the eulogy. He did it, promptly.

Mencken, too, has a fatherly regard for Cairns. Last year, the President, the faculty, and some of the trustees, of Johns Hopkins were unable to get Mencken to attend an international literary conference at their campus, which is not far from his home. When Cairns arrived to preside over the session and saw no Mencken, he realized that the affair would be a disappointment to the men of letters from all over the world to whom Baltimore means Mencken. He routed Mencken out of his study simply by calling him up and saying something like: "Put on your coat, Henry, and come down and have some beer with us."

Cairns has grown weary of the quest for obscurity, largely because it diverts him from the heavy schedule of creative work which he has mapped out for himself. He has so organized his censorship chores that they now consume only about three of his precious hours each week. His weekly shipment from the Customs Bureau averages about ten books, a hundred postcards, and a half dozen or so movie reels. These tend to dupli-

cate each other, year after year, a fact which lightens the job considerably. Very little new pornography has been published since the war, according to Cairns. He formerly advised the Treasury on tax as well as literary matters, but he resigned as assistant general counsel of the Treasury Department a few years ago, retaining only the censorship job. The job does not pay, and carries with it only the vague title of "Special Legal Advisor to the Treasury Department."

He is now ensconced in a luxuriously furnished office in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, where he holds down three positions: secretary, treasurer, and general counsel. He occupies a key policy-making spot between the philanthropists who donate the collections and the professional art scholars and curators who hang them. His common-sense layman's approach has been responsible for many gallery innovations. Since Cairns feels that "gallery fatigue" is the most serious occupational hazard of art lovers, he has impressed upon the attendants that anyone who so desires may ride in one of the Gallery's comfortable wheelchairs, regardless of physical condition. He also purchased baby-strollers to make gallery visits easier for mothers, and he has opened the beautiful Roman patio for Sunday evening concerts. During the war, he took on the extra chore of directing an Army project which saved Europe's art treasures from bombardment. As a reward, he was able to procure for the National

Gallery the privilege of exhibiting the great collection of masterpieces from the Berlin museums. This exhibition drew the largest crowds that ever visited an art showing — almost a hundred thousand in a single week.

IV

Like most lawyers who are truly erudite, Cairns writes legal documents in plain English; he likes to boil the complexities of the law down to simple common sense. This endears him to the staff of the Gallery, which appreciates the luxury of having a lawyer who tells them how they *can* do things, rather than what they *can not* do. As a matter of fact, it was Cairns' impatience with legalistic and bureaucratic delays which first brought him to the attention of the National Gallery. While he was an assistant general counsel at the Treasury Department, handling tax problems, Joseph Widener of Pennsylvania bequeathed a priceless collection of paintings to the Federal government. But his will provided that the United States could have the pictures only if it paid the state of Pennsylvania the inheritance tax due on them.

This was a princely gift, and the tax was piddling in comparison with the value of the paintings. But it is one of the oldest tenets of constitutional law that a state may not tax an instrumentality of the Federal government. The heavy thinkers at the Treasury were greatly perplexed about whether the Federal government could accept this bargain without compromising

an ancient principle. Many profound legal memoranda were passed back and forth behind the Treasury's Ionic colonnade, while the Gallery management sweated anxiously. On one hot summer day they decided to make a last desperate attempt to convince the Treasury of the urgency of a favorable ruling. But when they arrived at the Department they found that everyone handling the matter was on vacation, and that an assistant general counsel named Huntington Cairns was in charge. Cairns saw them, listened patiently to their story, then rang for a stenographer and dictated a ruling approving the transaction. "There's nothing in the Constitution that makes it illegal for us to use common sense," Cairns commented. A few weeks later, the National Gallery of Art hung some of the world's greatest paintings as part of its permanent collection.

Secretary Morgenthau was delighted when one of the museum's trustees told him of Cairns' quick decision. "It was very courageous of him to make up his mind so quickly, in the face of this alleged constitutional objection," the trustee said. "It was even more courageous of him to violate a sacred principle of government which is much older than the Constitution," Morgenthau replied. "I refer to the rule against ever making a decision when you can pass the buck to some one else."

The National Gallery occupies Cairns only from 9 to 5. Perhaps because he has spent so much time in

the pink marble temple which houses one of the world's great collections of Renaissance Art, he has become something of a Renaissance Man. In his spare time, Cairns has become at least a partial expert in almost every branch of knowledge. He has written highly respected technical treatises in more than a dozen widely separated fields, and is a passionate amateur in dozens of others. For several years he presided over the "Invitation to Learning" radio program with impressive versatility. He has just published his third volume on jurisprudence, *Legal Philosophy from Plato to Hegel*, and is now working on a fourth. *Limits of Art*, his anthology of the "supreme" passages of prose and poetry in several languages, was published last winter. He turns out a steady stream of articles on art, metaphysics, aesthetics, mathematical logic, taxation, and jurisprudence, most of them for highly technical journals. In all of these disciplines, Cairns is self-taught; he never attended college. But last year he lectured on music at Harvard, on jurisprudence at the National University of Mexico, and on literary criticism at the Johns Hopkins University, where ex-President Isaiah Bowman said in introducing him: "He has taken all knowledge for his province, and in every field he has gone far beyond the books. When I am in the presence of his mind, I find myself understanding more than I thought I could."

Harvard University has implored him to come to Cambridge and teach

anything that interests him, at any price he sets, but he has turned the offer down. He likes his life in the Washington-Baltimore area, and doesn't want to upset his carefully regulated schedule of reading and writing. In an age when most research is carried on under the sponsorship of universities and foundations, he proudly clings to an older tradition of independent scholarship. His lack of a college education is probably the key to his scholarly nature: he just never learned how dull study can be. Child psychologists tell us that the best way to ruin an infant's appetite is to force him to eat. Never having been compelled to eat against his will, Cairns is still hungry.

v

A friendly and gregarious man with a cherubic smile, Cairns is a devoted conversationalist and party-goer, but it is a sacred canon of his household that no dates can be made for Saturdays and Sundays, which are held inviolate for work and study. Although he does not exercise, he is very careful of his health. He tries to get from eight to nine hours of sleep every night, and to take frequent vacations at his beach house at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, not far from the spot where the Wright brothers first flew their plane. He smoked de-nicotinized cigarettes for several years, and recently gave up smoking entirely.

Cairns works furiously on weekends, rarely leaving his study until Sunday night, when he emerges with

a sheaf of manuscripts for his wife to criticize. In addition, he works when he can on week-day nights. He recently began a daily sunrise session from 6 to 8, which he devotes to translating Goethe's *Faust*, a work which he feels has never been worthily translated. "I've never been drawn to *Faust*," he says, "and I thought it was time to make my peace with it."

Havelock Ellis, who was damned by censors a few decades ago, was the subject of a lengthy "Appreciation" by Cairns. Ellis expressed gratitude because, while many Americans have praised his ideas, Cairns was the only one who had praised his style, a point of particular vanity. James Joyce has paid Cairns the honor of making him one of the few living men mentioned by name in *Finnegan's Wake*.

He has over 12,000 books, covering every wall in his apartment, carefully arranged by subject matter and language. His landlord has warned him that the floors will not stand the strain, and says that if he buys one more book, he will have to put it in the cellar. Cairns admits that he "can no more walk past a book shop than a sailor can walk past a saloon."

Cairns has spent his entire life under the careful tutelage of two brilliant women. The first was his grandmother, a member of the first graduating class of Hunter College, who took him in hand at an early age, and taught him the knack of fast and selective reading. The second is his wife, Florence, upon whose advice and critical judgment he relies heavily.

She is the daughter of a former Populist Senator from North Carolina. A tall, handsome woman who wears no makeup, she is more rigorously intellectual than Huntington, who would be just as happy talking about horse-racing as about Proust. At her dinner parties, conversation is firmly, if graciously, guided away from frivolous chitchat into purposeful channels. While some guests resent this discipline, they usually wake up the next morning feeling grateful for a stimulating respite from the endless Washington rumors about who is going to be the next Assistant to this or that Under-Secretary.

In a city where the great social events are the Jackson and Lincoln Day dinners, the Cairns household has resolutely maintained its philosophical detachment. Each year, on May 21, Cairns gives a Plato Day Dinner. It is a stag affair — or at least Florence does not appear until after coffee. The menu consists of Greek dishes and a potent cocktail called Appolo's Prayer. The dialectics usually pop until about three in the morning. Places are marked with the names of characters from Plato, and each guest must find the one who resembles him. There has been considerable agitation for wearing togas at these affairs, but so far the purists have lost to the black ties.

It is ironic that a sense of frustration should overhang the life of so energetic and prolific a man. But Cairns has become known to his contemporaries, not for his brilliant

scholarship and artistic criticism, for which he would like to be famous, but rather for the dull and routine chore of literary censorship, which occupies so little of his time, and for which he has so little relish.

He lacks the Peeping Tom instinct that would make censoring a sheer delight to so many people. He gallops through a tall stack of French postcards at breathless speed — he has seen them all before and isn't thrilled. He regrets that he can't speed up the movies too. He still shudders with horror at the recollection of seeing Hedy Lamarr in *Ecstasy* seven times. (The importer tried to cut as little as possible after each rejection, and was turned down six times. The picture's title is derived from close-ups of Hedy Lamarr's facial expressions during peak moments of passion, and it makes generous display of her nude form. "The dullest picture I ever saw," Cairns says.)

Yet people still remember Cairns for the *Ecstasy* case, even though they have never heard of his books. He has learned to be philosophic about this, and to smile resignedly when an interviewer gently steers him from Plato to pornography. But occasionally, after a few drinks with his old friends in Washington's Cosmos Club, he admits that he is a very frustrated man. "I could write a review praising a book to the skies, and it wouldn't affect the book's sales the slightest bit. But when I ban a book, it becomes a best seller overnight. Everybody rushes out to buy a copy."

MUSIC

by RALPH DE TOLEDANO



THE CULT OF THE CONDUCTOR

THE bare essentials of conducting, according to Charles O'Connell, can be learned in half an hour by anyone able to read a score. Though this overstates the case, it is nevertheless true that year after year the music schools turn out young men who can lead an orchestra through a reading of the standard symphonic repertory with considerable competence. There are, furthermore, a small number of highly skilled conductors who rot in the hinterland while the public clusters about the three or four "great names," elevated by God and their press agents to positions of unapproachable eminence.

The result is that to many who would have difficulty in distinguishing Monteverdi from Moussorgsky, Toscanini, Stokowski and Koussevitzky are now magical quantities. Carnegie

Hall audiences do not swoon, but they do flock to their heroes with genuine worship. It is enough to say that Toscanini is broadcasting or that Stokie is conducting: all questions of program are forgotten, as if the music were distinctly secondary.

Romantic legends about the interpretive genius of the man with the baton are what bring in the crowds, sell the phonograph records, pile up good Hooper ratings. If the conductor's personality is sufficiently powerful, if he can develop a colorful trademark, if he has that elusive quality of dynamic showmanship, then he is made. Any violence he may do to the written score, any infidelity to the intent of the composer, are as easily overlooked as lack of good taste in a beautiful woman. "Mood" becomes the criterion, and this is too often achieved by whipping up the musicians, distorting tempi, introducing gratuitous sonorities. From faults,

RALPH DE TOLEDANO, now an assistant editor of *Newsweek*, formerly wrote record reviews for the *MERCURY*. His anthology, *Frontiers of Jazz*, was published last year by Oliver Durrell.

these are converted into virtues — the signs of a “creative” soul.

Needless to say, it is not essential for a conductor to be wedded to the last hemidemisemiquaver in every score. Notation is at best a kind of musical shorthand which can be transformed into sound only because a tradition exists, guiding instrumentalist and conductor in performance. But though we cannot expect microtonic definition or metronomic exactitude, we can protest when the performer disregards text and tradition in favor of a purely subjective and “temperamental” negation of a composer’s will. This was recognized by Verdi, back in 1871, when, angered by such “tyranny,” he refused to let conductors interpret “creatively.”

Some time ago, Toscanini broadcast the *Magic Flute* overture. The radio audience which heard him, judging by its applause and by the comment of critics, greeted the performance thunderously — as did many sensitive musicians. Yet the complex of sounds that issued from the NBC Symphony that afternoon bore a greater relation to the *Heigh-Ho Silver* theme in *William Tell* than it did to Mozart. In the headlong rush of Toscanini’s “interpretation,” all semblance to the original rhythmic relationships was lost, along with the lyric quality of the music.

Discussing the Maestro’s cavalier treatment of both score and traditional groundwork, Virgil Thomson has written that “what seems to be more important is [Toscanini’s] un-

varying ability to put over a piece. Like Mendelssohn, he quite shamelessly whips up the tempo and sacrifices clarity and ignores a basic rhythm, just making his music, like his baton, go round and round if he finds his audience’s attention tending to waver. No piece has to mean anything specific; every piece has to evoke from its hearers a spontaneous vote of acceptance.”

Thomson calls this the “wow technique,” a term of singular aptness. The projection of Toscanini’s temperament, his ability to impose what has come to be called by musicians the “Toscanini beat” on every reading, and the unquestionable sincerity of his approach all induce a mass hypnosis and a suspension of the critical faculty in the public as well as in the musicians themselves.

II

Or consider the case of Stokowski. To the general public, Stokowski represents *the* conductor, perhaps even more than Toscanini. And musicians, always more concerned with technique than with content, have paid many tributes to his handling of an orchestra and to the incredible tonal quality he can extract from his men — although few have bothered to note that under the “colorless” Eugene Ormandy, the Philadelphia orchestra has not diminished in brilliance and has, in fact, gained musically.

Stokowski’s skill as a manipulator of orchestral sonorities, his interest in acoustics and balance in a radio age,

are all to his credit. To those who are overcome by his soaring brasses and the ripeness of his orchestrations, the question of fidelity to musical content may seem stuffy. But it is precisely here that violent exception can be taken. Defenders of Stokowski's transcriptions, for example, claim that in taking the music of Bach and subjecting it to the requirements of a modern orchestral palate, Stokowski has given the multitude a means of working its way into the great storehouse of baroque music. The fallacy here lies in the belief that pure Bach is just a little too much for the great unwashed. Many forget that the wandering hands of Stokowski have also meddled with Schubert, as when he added parts to the *B Minor* symphony. Or that when Stokowski moves over into the music of Wagner (who certainly wrote for modern orchestra), the same bombast creeps in. To uncritical Stokowski devotees, the impeccable and shimmering performance by Furtwängler of the *Good Friday Spell* (recorded ten years ago for RCA-Victor), or even Toscanini's current readings, seem rather dull.

Berlioz called the arrangement of masterworks "the most enormous of crimes, an assault on genius." But it would be a misconstruction to think that he meant by that a flat edict in favor of musical embalming. When Stiedry puts orchestral flesh on Bach's skeletal *Art of the Fugue*, this is an "arrangement" in a literal sense. But it is one which grows out of deep study to determine as nearly as pos-

sible how Bach himself would have given body to this exhaustive fugal exercise. When Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* is set for chamber orchestra in an attempt to clarify a work which to many is chaotic and well-nigh incomprehensible, it is an "arrangement" merely in dimension.

The *Passacaglia in C Minor* and the *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* as transcribed by Stokowski are definitely an assault on the whole internal logic of the original compositions. Rhythmic progressions, dynamic relationships, and the interplay of timbres are of equal consequence in the musical *gestalt*, and figure vastly in the re-creation of what Paul Nettl called the "psychic attitude" of the composer. In Stokowski's lushly romantic phrasing and climactic definition, it is his own psychic attitudes we are hearing, not Bach's.

III

Stokowski is not the only one who has given Johann Sebastian Bach a Russian accent. The Koussevitzky juggernaut, with its rolling cadences, its bland attack, and its elided phrasing, has rolled over the *Brandenburg Concertos* (and other works of Bach), driving from many ears the clean-contoured, four-square, Germanic reading by Otto Klemperer and the New Friends of Music of not too many years back. But Klemperer, unfortunately, has been reduced in the public memory to the lowest level of his tragic eccentricities, while Koussevitzky's reputation has been blown

up sky high. Consider these true words of Klemperer, written back in 1942:

The fact that expression marks and dynamics are rarely found in the actual manuscripts of Bach seems to challenge the interpreter to fill the vacuum. . . . If I were now asked how one should interpret Bach, my answer would be: as simply as possible. The unadorned interpretation is best. . . . The more we are aware of the spontaneity and directness of Bach's music, the less we must do to it in order to make it live again for others. . . .

More precisely, the conductor must filter his personality and technique through the composer's, and not vice versa. This is exactly what Toscanini claims to do, what at his best he succeeds in doing. In the achievement of this identification, the pattern of the music is spaciouly laid bare, and the significant inner voices of the score, which more "personal" conductors obscure, brought into aural focus. It is at these great moments that any conductor ceases to be a *prima donna* and becomes instead the agent of the composer's genius.

Concert-goers have permitted the conductor to forget that he is not a pianist improvising solo on his instrument. And the conductor, in turn, has forgotten that his first function is an executive one; he must lead the musicians under him, train them to respond to his direction, instill in them that *esprit de corps* which makes of a group of instrumentalists an orchestra, make them sensitive to his will. But his approach to the music

must be fundamentally different — as a student. To translate a score into sound, into color and pulse, he must have for it all the respect of a builder for an architect's blueprint.

IV

It is a relatively modern practice for the conductor to set himself above the composer, to insist in placing his own trademark on another's music. This error probably began with Mendelssohn who believed that all music should be played just a little faster than written, "to give it spirit." But if we go back to the beginnings of orchestral music, the picture is different. The function of the conductor then was to keep proper tempo, to insure precision and clarity, to impose cohesion, and to maintain orchestral balance. Vitality and accuracy were the criteria of good performance, not personal idiosyncrasy. From the start, emphasis was on training in the exact and scrupulous analysis of the musical score — something sadly lacking among our star-rated conductors.

Jean-Baptiste Lully, the father of conducting, led his orchestra not with æsthetically waving hands but with a heavy stick which he pounded to ensure instrumental and rhythmic discipline. It was this sort of discipline which distinguished the famous Mannheim orchestra and made it the most advanced in Europe, giving it the precision which permitted it to pioneer in the art of orchestral dynamics.

In the romantic era, with the mush-

rooming of orchestral size — in the early days of Western orchestration Monteverdi had been daring with 38 men, but Mahler dreamed of 1000 — the function of the conductor as technician should have been, by all logic, further stressed. The man on the podium now had to cope with mammoth string sections, brass choirs, and a variety of instrumentation which would have completely bewildered the pioneers. Today's conductor must also cope with pyramidal scoring, continual key changes, sudden shifts in tempo, cross rhythms, and abrupt dynamics — all of an infinite complexity. But the romantic era, unfortunately, nurtured as well a desire for bombast, for soulful effect — and for the heroic conductors who could feed this desire. Radio and the movies have carried this tendency to an extreme.

As a result, the stars rule the airwaves and the key concert halls while truly remarkable conductors are lost

in the shuffle. The great symphony orchestras like the Boston and the Philadelphia become the personal instruments of large musical egos, the New York Philharmonic is battered to a pulp by a succession of temperaments, and the public clamors for more. But an impeccable and sensitive orchestral musician like Pierre Monteux — admired by Brahms and Debussy, under whose direction *Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Daphnis and Chloë* were first performed — is banished to San Francisco after a long series of slights, beginning with his rejection by the Boston when Karl Muck left, and ending with the small notice he received for organizing and training Toscanini's NBC Symphony.

Wagner maintained that a conductor's first rule of interpretation must be "to convey the composer's intention with scrupulous fidelity . . . without introducing modifications of his own." This advice is still pertinent today.

RELUCTANCE

BY JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

The girl drew her fingers
from the old man's hand,
his coarse withered fingers.
Can she understand
that his hands were a cradle
when a small child cried?
His hands were a pillow
when his old wife died.

GENERAL WALTER BEDELL SMITH MEETS THE PRESS

As Chief of Staff to General Eisenhower during the Second World War, and later as our Ambassador to Russia, Lieutenant-General Walter Bedell Smith has achieved an enviable reputation as a distinguished military man and diplomat. His views on world affairs are of special significance, for he has dealt with the men in the Kremlin and can speak about any possible conflict in the future with the authority of one who has had extensive experience on the highest levels of military leadership. His remarks (slightly cut) on a broadcast of Meet the Press, presented by the Mutual Broadcasting System in cooperation with the editors of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, merit the attention of every American.

THE participants in the broadcast, aside from General Smith, were John Hightower of the Associated Press, William H. Lawrence of the New York Times, Marquis Childs of United Features, and Lawrence E. Spivak, editor of the MERCURY. Albert Warner, the Mutual commentator, presided.

LAWRENCE: General Smith, we've signed the Atlantic Pact on the basis of a calculated risk: that the Russian reaction would be only verbal or diplomatic. Do you think there's any possibility that the Pact will bring on conflict?

SMITH: Mr. Lawrence, I'm going to answer you by quoting a statement made by Lord Palmerston a long time ago, but which is just as applicable today as it was when he made it. He said: "The policy and

practice of the Russian government have always been to push forward its encroachments as fast and as far as the apathy or want of firmness of other governments would allow, but always to stop and retire when it met decided resistance, then to wait for the next favorable opportunity to spring on its victim."

CHILDS: A question related to that, General Smith, is — do you think Stalin and the men in the Politburo believe that war with the West is inevitable?

SMITH: One of the cardinal tenets of Soviet political philosophy is that the two systems cannot exist side by side for long in the same world without conflict. But I don't think that the Soviet government puts a definite time limit on this period of co-existence.

CHILDS: You mean that they believe eventually we must come to an armed conflict?

SMITH: Apparently they so believe. After you read Lenin you arrive at the conclusion that that is their belief.

HIGHTOWER: General, Secretary Acheson said that we're approaching the time when we can deal with equal strength with those who oppose us. Do you think this means we're beginning a sort of final showdown period?

SMITH: It's difficult to answer that categorically. A final showdown period might extend over a very long period of time. I don't put a limit of five, or ten, or even fifty, years on it. The important thing is that we have established a definite foreign policy. If we follow that foreign policy vigorously, and consistently, I think the results will be as the Secretary of State has indicated.

SPIVAK: General, what do you think would be the effect on the Russian government if the Senate failed to approve the Pact?

SMITH: I think it would give the Russian government the greatest possible encouragement.

SPIVAK: Well, General, suppose we approve the Pact but refuse to implement it by helping to arm Western Europe. What do you think the effect of that would be?

SMITH: The result would simply be a Pact without any force behind it. You'd have nothing but a paper

document which wouldn't be worth a great deal.

SPIVAK: You think the implementation of the Pact, then, is just as important as the signing of the Pact itself?

SMITH: I think it's even more important. We've got to help Western Europe. I don't believe that it would be wise to pour a great deal of money into Western Europe for economic rehabilitation without providing also the sinews necessary to defend it.

SPIVAK: You think, then, that it would be wiser to give them some of our own armament money if we couldn't add to our present military budget?

SMITH: I think we have to strike a balance between the two.

CHILDS: The whole line of propaganda attack from Russia is that the Western powers intend to wage aggressive war against the Soviet Union. Do the Russian leaders put any credence in that, General Smith?

SMITH: I can't take that line seriously at all. Nor do I believe that the gentlemen in the Kremlin really believe that.

CHILDS: You think that's purely propaganda?

SMITH: Our whole history is a negation of a statement of that kind.

LAWRENCE: Well, General, there were stories current during the campaign that the Politburo itself was very narrowly divided on the issue of immediate war; that there might

be just one or two votes preventing armed conflict in the immediate future.

SMITH: Mr. Lawrence, I don't think anybody can answer that question except a member of the Politburo. I have a feeling, however, that the vital question of war versus peace is constantly under examination in the Soviet Union, as in other dictatorships.

LAWRENCE: But do you feel that there are two forces working there? Did you feel in your contact with the Russian government that there was one segment which seemed to be more cooperative than another segment? That there were some people who had the Western view, and others who saw nothing good in the West, and no possibilities of cooperation?

SMITH: I did have such a feeling, but there are no facts that I could produce to support that feeling.

SPIVAK: General, do you agree with those who maintain that the Russians can take Europe in two, three, or four weeks?

SMITH: I do not, Mr. Spivak. The supply problem is a vital one, and while the Russian Army is a magnificent organization, the difficulties of supplying it in a long and rapid advance are enormous.

SPIVAK: You think, then, that the expenditure of money to help the West would not be lost quickly?

SMITH: I do indeed think so. It would not be lost.

HIGHTOWER: I wonder if you'd ex-

pand a little bit, sir, on your opinion of the Russian Army. How well would its people fight in a war outside their own country, a war which they might consider aggressive?

SMITH: It's difficult to assess that except from the lessons of history. The Russian soldier has always fought magnificently when he was fighting in defense of Mother Russia. The Russian Army has not itself been an aggressive army. Nevertheless, I should like to point out one thing, which I'm taking from Bertram D. Wolfe's very interesting book, *Three Who Made a Revolution*. Wolfe develops the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, one European in seven was a Russian. At the beginning of the twentieth, one European in four was a Russian. The ratio is still changing in Russia's favor, and if we include all the newly annexed territory and all areas under the domination of the Russian Army or under the control of puppet governments, at the present time about one European in two is under the control of the Kremlin.

CHILDS: General, as a military man, do you think if this calamity of a war between the two great powers came — would it be a short war ended by atomic bombing within a few months, or a long war?

SMITH: I can't imagine it would be a short war, Mr. Childs. I feel this way about it. It's often been said

that a civil war is the most terrible of all wars, because that's the only war in which fighting men on both sides have a pretty good idea of what they're fighting for. A war with Russia would be a civil war of humanity, and I can't think that it would be anything but a prolonged, protracted, disastrous war, which nobody could win. Nobody wins a modern war, anyway.

CHILDS: Some estimates have said twenty years. Do you think it might be that long?

SMITH: That's something that could only be answered after a prolonged study; a shotgun answer would be of no value at all.

SPIVAK: General, do you agree with Mr. Churchill that the atomic bomb saved all of Europe from being overrun by the Russians?

SMITH: It's difficult for me to answer that question, Mr. Spivak. It certainly had considerable effect, but whether or not it saved Europe from being overrun by Russia is something I don't know. At the present time, I don't think that Russia has the intention of overrunning Europe.

SPIVAK: You don't think the Russians have the bomb yet?

SMITH: I don't think they have the bomb in quantity production, although I'm quite sure that Soviet science, being what it is — and it's as good as any science in the world — has solved the problem of atomic fission in the laboratories and notebooks.

SPIVAK: General, if you think, from your studies of Lenin, that the Russians believe war to be inevitable, you must also believe that they're going to pick the time that is most satisfactory to them to start a war. Don't you?

SMITH: I think that if they feel that the time has come when war is imminent, they will act. Yes. The gentlemen in the Kremlin are not gamblers.

WARNER: I take it you don't foresee a time, General, when we can say to the Russians, let's sit down and talk things over and see whether we can come to a basic understanding. Is there no hope of that in the future at all?

SMITH: Certainly there's hope. If there weren't hope of that then life wouldn't be worth living. I don't foresee it, but I hope for it.

HIGHTOWER: General, do you think that such a settlement might have to begin on a basis of spheres of influence — at least as a starting point of discussion?

SMITH: The United States is not prepared to discuss spheres of influence. We don't believe that's the way to live in this world. I think that if we were prepared to discuss spheres of influence, we might strike a receptive note with the Russians. But we don't believe in that.

HIGHTOWER: Do you think that the Russians might be prepared to conduct discussions on some other basis?

SMITH: I don't know, Mr. Hightower.

CHILDS: Do you think Stalin is a very sick man? And who will get his job when he goes?

SMITH: I don't think that Generalissimo Stalin is a very sick man. It's rumored in Moscow that he's had one or two mild heart attacks, but he's rugged and looks well. Georgians have notoriously long lives, and there's no reason to believe that Generalissimo Stalin won't live and exercise his present enormous influence for a long time to come.

CHILDS: Did you have a final interview with him before you left, General?

SMITH: Not a final interview. I talked with him about two or three months before I left.

CHILDS: Was he cordial or not?

SMITH: He's always cordial. I must say that the representatives of the Soviet government are eminently correct when you talk to them.

LAWRENCE: What's the significance, as you see it, of the shift in the Politburo, the change in the Foreign Ministry, the elimination of Voznesensky, and the other changes which have taken place in Russia recently?

SMITH: There's one missing link, and until we know about that it'll be difficult to assess the significance of the changes. That is the work which will be carried on by Mr. Molotov, who has now ceased to be Foreign Minister. My own opinion is that it is a return to the

situation which existed before 1928. At that time — do you want me to continue?

WARNER: Go ahead.

SMITH: At that time, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Foreign Trade were directed by technicians. Then the Soviet government realized that it might be profitable to conduct negotiations on a diplomatic level with some of its neighbors, notably with Germany. And so Mr. Molotov became Minister of Foreign Affairs. Now his departure from the Foreign Office, and the departure of Mr. Mikoyan from the Ministry of Foreign Trade, would seem to mean a return of those two agencies of the Soviet government to the control of technicians. It would indicate to me that they don't expect to accomplish very much in the immediate future *via* diplomatic channels or *via* foreign trade outside their own satellite area.

LAWRENCE: You say there is one missing link, which is what Mr. Molotov will do. Has there been any news at all of any important activities by Mr. Molotov since he left?

SMITH: None that I'm aware of. One can only speculate. My own guess is that he will be much more intimately concerned with the operation of the Cominform, and particularly with the pressure that's being placed on Yugoslavia and other states.

CHILDS: I take it, then, General

Smith, that you do not expect any new peace offensive which might coincide with the lifting of the Berlin blockade?

SMITH: I *would* expect a peace offensive.

CHILDS: You'd expect a peace offensive?

SMITH: That's one of the interesting phenomena of Communist tactics. They conduct a peace offensive and a war scare simultaneously.

SPIVAK: General, is the Voice of America getting through to the Russians, and is it playing an important part, in your judgment?

SMITH: It is getting through. Definitely. About two years ago, when the existence of the Voice of America was threatened, and I returned to help defend it, I estimated that there were about a million-and-a-half radio receivers in the Soviet Union capable of getting Voice of America broadcasts. That was a gross underestimation. There are many more than that, and we hear from many sources of the increasing size of the radio audience, both for the Voice of America and for the British Broadcasting Company.

HIGHTOWER: That brings up the question of how much the Russian people really believe what they're told by their own radio, and what they read in their own papers.

SMITH: Mr. Hightower, I will describe to you an interesting phenomenon in connection with the mass of the Russian people, a people who be-

came literate, the majority of them, after reaching maturity. In my opinion, the Russian people have an almost religious veneration for the printed word and for the officially spoken word. The American people tend to discount any official pronouncement of their own government. The Russian people accept it completely and wholly. But they also accept official statements from other governments. So they are as inclined to believe the official broadcasts of the Voice of America, in my opinion, as they are the broadcasts over their own radio. And that puts the Russian listener in a quandary: he gets two different stories from what he considers to be two authentic sources.

WARNER: General Smith, do an ambassador and his staff in Moscow have any opportunity to get in contact with ordinary Russian people? Or are you pretty well isolated?

SMITH: One is isolated — yes.

LAWRENCE: May I ask a companion question on that? As Chief of Staff to General Eisenhower at SHAEF, you must have become acquainted with a number of Russians; perhaps you even became friendly with some of them. How much opportunity did you have to see them after you got to Moscow?

SMITH: Almost none, Mr. Lawrence.

LAWRENCE: Did you see them at all?

SMITH: I called, for instance, on Marshal Zhukov after I arrived in Moscow. Marshal Zhukov received me in the War Office in the pres-

ence of another general officer, and we had a short, informal and unimportant conversation.

LAWRENCE: But the intimate relation of Berlin was gone?

SMITH: Absolutely gone.

CHILDS: General Smith, what about the so-called peace conference at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, and the other one in Paris? Do you think they're subsidized by Moscow? And if so, what motive would Moscow have?

SMITH: I don't know whether they're subsidized by Moscow at all. I doubt that they are. They're encouraged by Moscow because, like all front organizations, they aid in deluding a number of well-intentioned, well-meaning people.

CHILDS: You mean Moscow would like to delude people over here so that we'd pull back on the armament program and the rest of it?

SMITH: Yes. I'm quite sure of that.

SPIVAK: General, do you think we made any mistakes in dealing with the Germans? Are you satisfied today with what we've done since 1945?

SMITH: Mr. Spivak, it's impossible to handle a situation like that without making mistakes. But I have the most profound admiration for General Clay and the way he's conducted affairs in Germany; I don't know of anybody who could have done as well. He was handicapped initially by a certain lack of coordination in this country. That's been ironed out now, and while we

have made mistakes, we are now getting back to the policies that were recommended by General Eisenhower before he gave up the command in Germany.

SPIVAK: Do you think we made serious mistakes in dealing with the Russians?

SMITH: Initially I think we did. I think it's perfectly excusable. We completely overlooked the great obstacle of Communist doctrine and Communist mentality.

SPIVAK: You feel that we're now well on the road, though, to overcoming most of those mistakes . . .

SMITH: I do.

SPIVAK: . . . through the North Atlantic Pact?

SMITH: It seems that everyone has to learn about the Soviet Union the hard way. We've learned the hard way, but I think we *have* learned. I know that the people who are directing the destinies of this country, and the American people themselves, are thoroughly alive to the situation.

CHILDS: Talking of the past, could our troops have occupied Berlin and Prague, General?

SMITH: I'm confident they could have. We decided not to occupy Berlin because Berlin, at the time, had no political significance to us; and because we had another job to do, which was to cut the German Army off from its last redoubt in the Bavarian Alps.

WARNER: I'm sorry, General Smith; our time is up.

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THE PROMISE

A STORY

BY RAMONA STEWART

LOUISE put her glass down on the coffee table and the clink broke the dreaming silence of the California afternoon.

"Ann, honey," she said. "I'm afraid we're going to have to tell your father after all."

Ann looked up at her quickly. "Oh, mother," she said.

Louise's soft pretty face grew troubled. "I'm no good at hiding things, baby."

"You're not hiding anything," Ann said.

She was a thin, pale girl of thirteen who still looked young and unfinished, like a bud that might open to any color. She watched her mother, her dark eyes quick and cautious.

"I don't see the harm in just telling him about it," Louise pressed gently.

"You can't. You promised," Ann said. "He'll argue and shout and you'll change your mind."

"I give you my word," Louise began.

"He'll talk you out of it. He always does."

"Now, darling, please don't get ex-

cited," Louise said. "Try to see my side of it. There are some things you just don't understand yet. Mac is your father and he's got a right to know."

"Why should he?" Ann said. "A lot he cared about me or his rights when he wanted to marry somebody else."

As soon as the words were out she realized she'd made a mistake. Louise frowned thoughtfully and lit another cigarette. Her large blue eyes were hazy with reflection and she ran long white fingers through her loosely waved black hair. She was really beautiful, Ann thought; she was glad there had been a divorce because with Mac gone Louise came to depend on her more.

"Annie, dear," Louise said. "I don't know how to explain about the divorce — there were so many things that went wrong between Mac and me. It wasn't your father's fault particularly. We just weren't suited to each other."

"It was *her* fault," Ann said doggedly.

"That was later, honey. We were

RAMONA STEWART is the author of *Desert Town*, a novel published by William Morrow, and of many short stories. She was a student at the University of Southern California.

all through long before he met Paula. We just stayed married because of you and Little Mac. And we kept quarreling so all the time."

"He kept quarreling."

"No," Louise said, and picked up her drink. "I quarreled too, baby."

"I don't care if you did. You had to be around him." Ann astonished herself by breaking into tears. "I don't want to talk about him," she said violently. "I don't ever want to talk about him." She sank down on the sofa and put her face in Louise's lap.

"Oh my God," Louise said softly.

She began to stroke Ann's hair back out of her face, gathering it together at the nape of her neck. In spite of herself, Ann felt calmness flowing into her at Louise's touch, lazy, cool, a little distracted, and after a bit she was soothed and let herself be pushed away. She watched peacefully as Louise got up, walked across the cream-colored string rug, past the bowl of cabbage roses on the grand piano, to the cabinet bar.

The room was like Louise, full of gay, unrelated pieces. The impressionistic French water-color on the wall over the piano didn't fit with the Copenhagen china cat sitting on the rug beneath it. The sofa and three of the chairs had originally been lemon-yellow modern but like most of Louise's ideas, they hadn't worked out too well and now they were covered with red and green chintz slipcovers. The fireplace didn't heat but they burned colored powder in it at night and it was very pretty.

Louise made herself a scotch and then turned back to Ann resolutely. "Darling, your father will be simply furious if we don't tell him. I'm going to call him right now and get it settled."

She walked to the bookshelves and picked up the French phone before Ann could argue, and gave the operator Mac's number in Santa Monica. While it was ringing, she looked up and nodded at the square crystal ash-tray on the coffee table. Ann brought it over to her and then stood kicking at the edge of the rug with the heels of her saddle shoes, staring out the long windows at the ocean beyond the garden and the cliff.

"Hello, Paula," Louise said cheerfully. "How are you?"

Ann's face was impassive. Paula was young and thin and diffident, with none of Louise's lazy warmth. She reminded Ann of a librarian. She was painful when she tried to be friends. The few visits Ann and Little Mac had made to her house were filled with agonizing silences, when they had all three sat and stared and waited hopefully for Mac to say something amusing or start a row, anything to create a diversion.

"Paula, dear, is Mac around?" Louise asked. "I'm going to upset him, I'm afraid." A pause. "Ann doesn't want to go back to Miss Taylor's and I just can't force her to against her will. But Mac was so set on it——"

Ann frowned. "You don't have to tell *her*," she said.

Louise raised her fine black eyebrows slightly and shook her head. Ann looked away.

"Hello, Mac," Louise said. "Did Paula tell you? . . . Well, I don't know. If Ann doesn't want to. . . . It's all very well for you to say that, but I have to live with her. . . . I think you're being too harsh." Louise's voice deepened with irritation. "But I promised her."

Mac's voice got suddenly loud. Ann heard it bumbling through the phone like an angry bee trapped in a bottle. Louise took the instrument away from her ear, drank half her scotch and then went on listening until Mac finished.

"All right," she said quietly. "If you feel you have to. In half an hour."

She set the phone back in its cradle, strolled across the room and stood at the window, her forehead pressed against the pane.

"He's coming up," Ann said. "Isn't he?"

Louise nodded without bothering to turn around. "Why don't you take Little Mac and go down to the matinee?" she asked.

"I'll stay," Ann said.

Louise sighed. She finished the scotch.

For a moment, Ann tried to think of a way to make Louise stop drinking, so she'd keep cool and in control of herself until it was over. But there was nothing she could say that didn't sound nagging and while she was still trying words, Little Mac came running down the back hall. He stopped

at the living-room arch, looked in, and then came strolling to them. He was eleven, but he was tall for his age. He was wearing jeans and a T-shirt and he had his bathing trunks and a wet towel slung over his shoulder.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Dearfather is coming over," Ann said, running the words together.

"Ann——" Louise began.

"Dad?" Pleasure spread over Little Mac's tan face and brightened the blue eyes that were so much like Louise's. "I guess I better go change clothes."

He ran out of the room and they heard him bounding up the stairs two at a time.

"You see," Louise said. "He loves Mac."

"He doesn't love Mac. He just likes the idea of having a father," Ann said. "And anyway, he's awfully young."

"Sometimes——" Louise began, and then stopped, baffled. "Aren't you going to change your dress?"

"What for?" Ann asked. "He isn't going to like the way I look anyhow."

II

It was quiet and serene, just the three of them sitting around the sunlit living room. Little Mac had put on a blue sports shirt and white pants, and his dark blond hair was wet and slicked back. Louise was half lying on the sofa in her long yellow hostess gown, one leg drawn under her, her eyes dazed with thought. Ann still had on her blouse, sweater, and baggy skirt. She was reading a novel and

twisting a strand of hair between her fingers, nibbling occasionally at the frayed ends.

Then they heard Mac's car in the driveway and the peace was shattered. They heard the door-chimes ring and the maid letting him in, and they all looked up.

His impatient footsteps sounded in the hall and then he was standing in the living-room entrance-way.

He was a tall man with black curly hair and spaniel's eyes. He was overweight but his skin had the smooth tan of a man who has plenty of time to lie in the sun. Like Little Mac, he had obviously just changed clothes, but he was already sweating through his sport shirt.

As he came into the room, he smiled. It made him look hot, confused, irritated and pleading, all at the same time. Like a fat girl at a dancing party, Ann thought, angry and ashamed, standing alone against a wall; and suddenly she was humiliated that he should be her father and allow himself to look like that.

"Hello, Dad," Little Mac said, jumping up and offering his hand. "It's good to see you. Won't you have a seat, sir?"

Mac went on smiling but they all saw the twitch of exasperation that caught his face. He clapped Little Mac's shoulder to avoid the handshake and sat down on Little Mac's chair.

"Hello, Louise," he said. "What are you drinking?"

"Scotch. It's in the cabinet. Help yourself."

"I don't suppose you have any decent beer."

"I think so. Little Mac, run out and ask Molly for some beer."

"Yes, Mother," Little Mac said brightly.

As he left the room, Mac took a deep breath. "Can't you tone him down a little?"

"He's all right, really," Louise said. "He's not like that around his friends. It's just his way of making you like him."

"I keep expecting him to kiss my hand."

Louise removed her gaze from him and directed it into space. She sat smoking until Little Mac returned with a tall glass of beer and a coaster which he put down on the table beside Mac's chair. He handed Mac the beer and went to sit on the piano bench in the corner of the room.

"What are you reading, Ann?" Mac asked.

Ann pushed the strand of hair behind her ear and looked up from her novel. "Oh, nothing," she said.

They looked at each other. Mac's mouth went on smiling stubbornly, but at last he turned to Louise, and when he spoke his voice was low and reasonable.

"What's this all about?" he asked. "Let's talk it out sensibly without a scene."

"It's a very simple matter, actually," Louise said. "Ann doesn't like Miss Taylor's. She's gone there a year, so she's given it a fair chance and she's still unhappy."

"I see," Mac said. "And exactly how does she propose to get an education?"

"There's a public school in the village, Mac. Little Mac's been going to it and it seems to be quite good."

"It's great, Dad, really keen," Little Mac said from the piano bench. "I've learned a lot."

"Mm," Mac said. "Well, Ann?"

For a moment, she almost didn't bother answering. Mac already had it figured out his way and he wasn't going to listen. Still, she couldn't give up without trying.

"I just don't want to go back," she said slowly. "I want to stay home. I can study here as well as I can at Miss Taylor's."

"What I am trying to discover," he said with heavily good-humored patience, "is what you have against Miss Taylor's."

"Everything."

"Nothing in particular." He smiled.

"Just everything."

She flushed. "All right. If you want a list. I don't like the other girls or the teachers or Miss Taylor herself or the dancing lessons or deportment lectures. And it isn't that I just don't like it—I hate it. I'd rather be in jail."

"It's one way of being decently prepared for an Eastern college," Mac said.

"And I don't want to go to college either," she said rashly.

"That I insist on."

"You don't have anything to say about it."

For a moment it seemed as if the storm would crash around them, and Ann made her face a blank to endure it. But Mac checked himself and there was merely an increased tension in the room.

"Louise," he said, "let's face facts. Ann has a stronger will than yours. At Miss Taylor's, she's subjected to some discipline. She rides horseback and swims and she's forced to mingle with girls her own age. If she goes to public school, she'll live at home and twist you around her finger. No exercise, lying on the bed in her room reading trash all day, mooning over phonograph records, living on movies and the radio. She has no friends. She never goes out without you. My God, look at her stoop. Look at her pasty complexion after a summer half a mile from the beach. Three months at home with you, and look at her."

"At that age——" Louise began weakly.

"What will she be like at twenty? A bookish neurotic, hiding behind her mother's skirts, afraid of the world. Do you think she'll ever marry? I ask you truthfully, do you think any man would be idiot enough to want to marry her?"

Ann closed her book and got up. "I don't think I shall want to marry," she said coldly. "There are too many chances of getting stuck."

"Ann!" Louise warned, but it was too late.

"You're going back to Miss Taylor's and that's final," Mac said angrily. "We'll have no more discussion."

"I'm not," Ann said. "Mother promised."

She glanced quickly at Louise's beautiful face, a little stunned by scotch, and then she flung herself down beside Louise and took hold of her. "Tell him I'm not going back," she said. "He has nothing to say about me any more. Tell him to go away."

"Hush, honey," Louise said. "Now listen here, Mac. It's one thing to advise and talk calmly and another to come over and throw the children into fits."

"If a little common sense throws them into fits, you've done a pretty bad job as a mother."

"I've done the best I can," Louise said. "It isn't easy to bring up two high-strung kids by yourself. Once in a while I may have made mistakes——"

"You'd make fewer of them if you tried staying sober."

There was a silence. Ann felt her mother begin to tremble and drew away from her. Louise's round blue eyes were focusing at last as she gathered the diffused bits of her strength, and suddenly Ann was excited and a little sick at her stomach.

"Ann," Louise said. "You and Little Mac run down to the matinee in the village."

"Mother——"

"Take the money out of my purse," Louise said evenly. "It's lying on my bed."

Ann hesitated, but she knew she was going to obey. Even Little Mac was afraid. His face was held in a keen

and pleasant expression, as if so long as he pretended not to have heard the words, they hadn't really been said. But his smile was getting tighter and more drawn each moment, and his eyes were straining against tears.

I can't stand it if he cries, Ann thought, and all at once she was on her feet, shepherding him out of the room before her.

III

They walked down the hill in silence, past the big white houses with rust-colored clay roofs. Eucalyptus trees shaded the winding street and the lawns on either side of them were covered with orange, avocado and lemon trees, hibiscus and camellia bushes. The warm sunny air was scented with ocean and roses. Half way to the village, they passed the school grounds. In the street stood a metal cut-out of a little girl holding a slate which read: PROTECT OUR CHILDREN. Here they had to stop while a children's party from the riding academy went by, led by an elderly man on a brown horse.

He bowed to Ann and Little Mac, and touched his tweed cap. The boys waved to Little Mac and shouted, and he waved back.

"We ought to go up to the stables some time," he said to Ann. "We must have fifty dollars worth of lessons left."

"You go if you like," she said.

They were both silent, remembering the riding lessons had been Mac's Christmas present to them last year.

"I don't see that it would hurt you," Little Mac said.

Ann looked at him impatiently. He had recovered his air of cheerfulness, and in his anxiety for harmony she knew he was already making excuses for the outrageous thing Mac had said to Louise.

"He *is* a lot of fun sometimes," he said, interpreting her glance. "And he's awfully smart. Remember the time you were in trouble at school, and he went to see the principal and got him so rattled?"

"Why do you always stand up for him? He doesn't care so much for you."

She was sorry as soon as she said it. Little Mac's broad face mottled under his tan, and she wished he would lash back at her. Instead he jammed his fists into his trouser pockets and said doggedly: "Just because he likes you better is no reason I have to say everything he does is wrong. He's got a bad temper, but Mother isn't perfect either."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

She walked faster, keeping a little ahead of him so that he wouldn't have to answer. But he had been wounded deeper than she thought. He caught up with her, and before he had a chance to be afraid he threw the words directly at her.

"She does get drunk and you know it."

It was out. For the second time that day the unpardonable thing had been said, and not by herself who was

brave, but by Little Mac who was a coward.

"You're horrible," she said. "You're really horrible."

For an instant, she considered walking off and leaving him. And then she saw the terror in his eyes. The boy who had spoken was as much a stranger to him as he had been to her. Now he was just Little Mac, with apology in his face, begging her to pretend that nothing unpleasant had been said.

"We'd better hurry," she said.

IV

They stood close together in the back of the theatre, waiting to get used to the darkness. Ann kept her eyes from the figures on the screen and stared hard at the blackest places, but Little Mac was the first to become adjusted.

He put his hand on her arm and whispered: "Okay. Follow me." And together they marched quickly down the aisle.

Generally, they quarreled about the seats. Little Mac liked it best somewhere in the first three rows and Ann insisted on sitting farther back. Today he stopped half-way down the aisle and whispered: "All right?"

"Somebody has an orange in there," Ann said. "I can smell it."

He led her three more rows and stopped on the other side of the aisle. "You can have the outside seat if you want."

She almost refused it. Their most furious arguments were about who got the aisle seat, and it seemed mean to take advantage of his remorse.

Still, he shouldn't have said that about Louise. She sat down on the aisle and compromised by asking him if he was sure he could see.

"Great," he said, straining tall in his seat. "I'm fine."

She gave him a package of chocolate nuts she had bought at the glass and chrome Candy Bar in the lobby and then looked at the screen.

The feature was already on, and at first she had trouble paying attention. She kept wondering about Mac and Louise, about what was going on in the house on the hill, and at the thought of Miss Taylor's she felt as if she were going down fast in an elevator. Mac was wrong; he didn't know. She might be pale and stooped and bookish, but Miss Taylor's wasn't going to fix anything. She made no more friends there than she did anywhere else, and at Miss Taylor's the stark fact of her difference from the rest was always with her, a dragging shame she was never let to escape. Always there were the interviews with the school psychologist, the sense of being a problem, the misery of the cooperative games. In the dark of the theatre, her face felt hot and she moved restlessly in her seat.

"What's the matter?" Little Mac asked.

"Keep still," she said. "Watch the picture."

V

A cold fog was crawling in from the ocean when they followed the crowd into the street. The village stores were

gray and blurred, and drops of water stood out like goose-flesh on the cars parked at the curb.

"Will you be warm enough?" Little Mac asked.

Ann nodded. "If we walk fast."

She took his arm and they went up the hill, clinging together and pushing each other forward. The dampness had brought out the sharp, medicinal scent of the eucalyptus trees, and below them the choppy sea looked raw and lonely.

"Maybe we're going to have a storm," Little Mac said. "Do you think?"

"Keep still and *walk*."

"Okay." He gave a little skip to match his stride to hers. "Ann, I didn't mean what I said about Mother."

"Forget it."

"Hokay."

This was the way he always apologized, as if it didn't matter at all and he had thought of it by purest chance. It was irritating but it didn't do any good to snap at him. It was an indelible part of him, like the automatic way he smiled when he was afraid.

"Look," she said sharply. "He's still here." They had come up over the hill where they could see the house and Mac's cream convertible parked in the driveway. They stood uncertainly, still locking arms, and after a moment Little Mac said: "What do we do now?"

"Go in. After all, it isn't his house."

"I suppose." He loosened his arm and followed her up the path.

The front door was open, and as they walked slowly down the hall toward the living room, Ann heard Mac talking. She couldn't make out the words but his voice was rumbling and full of assurance. He was pleased with himself and she knew what that meant. She felt a sudden sense of helplessness and betrayal. She walked into the living room and Mac looked up.

"Hello." His voice was hearty. "You back already?"

Louise was standing at the grand piano. She swung around unsteadily and balanced herself with one hand on the mahogany top. In the other she held an empty glass.

"Hello, darlings," she said. "Did you have a good time?"

"Yes, Mother," Little Mac said politely.

Ann could not speak. She tried to catch her mother's eyes, but Louise was looking at Mac, pleading with him not to say anything, to keep the peace.

"Well," he said. "I'll be off."

He got up and took Little Mac's shoulder, prodding him ahead of him into the hall. Louise put her arm about Ann's waist and they all walked to the front door.

"How's the riding, son?" Mac asked. "Jumping yet?"

"Uh — no sir," Little Mac admitted. "I haven't got that far."

Ann could see Mac wasn't listening, didn't really care. He smiled around at them, then opened the front door and went out.

Ann stood and watched him go. Behind her she heard Louise and Little Mac walk off down the hall, but she stood at the door until Mac drove away. Finally, she shut the door and went back to the living room.

Little Mac was picking out a melody on the piano with one finger. Louise was at the cabinet bar. She took an ice cube from the thermojar and it skidded across the floor. She went over to it with a show of leisurely control, picked it up with the tongs and dropped it into the bowl of cabbage roses.

Ann stood straight and tall for a moment, seeing them all together again: Mac who always knew best, who had to know best; Little Mac afraid of anybody's anger; Louise who took any thumbprint, like plasticine. Suddenly she hated them all but most of all she hated Louise, for being soft.

"Mother," she said. "You promised."

Louise turned to her: "Please, honey. Let's not argue. Mac's right. It's best for you. And you'll like it better this time. Honestly you will."

Ann saw herself back at Miss Taylor's, an awkward girl with hair like string, rude and bad-tempered, with not even Louise's guilty pity standing between her and the world.

She knew what she had to do. Her shoulders ached with weariness already, and she was sick at the thought, but she had no choice.

"No," she said.

"Baby, it's all settled."

Fear came down around Ann like fog. She ran over and buried her face against Louise's breast. "No," she said. "It isn't settled. I won't let it be settled. You'll have to call him up again and tell him I won't go."

"Oh, darling, please," Louise said weakly. "Please go back to Miss Taylor's. For me."

She felt Louise's soft white hand stroking her hair, and faintly, mingled

with the scent of scotch, she smelled Louise's familiar sweet perfume. She wanted to cry again, but she wouldn't.

"No, Mother. You've been drinking. You don't understand. I can't go back. I won't. I've got to stay with you. I love you. Mac doesn't love you, but I do. I love you terribly."

She hid her face and clung tightly. Louise need never know how she hated her or how she hated herself.

SEA OF WIND

BY SJANNA SOLUM

*This wind of evening weaves a spell —
Changing to under-water fern
These waving trees! As varied shell,
Anemones gleam white! We turn
Our faces up to aqueous air,
While clouds churn into foam and float
On surging current-billows where
A silver driftwood of new moon
Rides high above . . . We pause to note
Each other's face: a lost doubloon
Upturned upon an ocean-floor,
Mysteriously vague — and found
Familiar, only as from ground
We rise, join hands, seek lighted door,
And enter in, still dazed — still under
This windy, sea-enchanted wonder!*

THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by BERGEN EVANS



*That lightning, cannon balls and
buzz-bombs never strike twice in
the same place*

Marryat, in *Peter Simple*, has a prudent midshipman, during a naval engagement, stick his head through a hole made by a cannon ball, on the assumption that the odds were overwhelmingly against another ball hitting that exact spot.

Since it is upon just such an interpretation of the law of averages that much modern supernaturalism relies, one cannot too often point out the fallacy involved. Dr. Horace Levinson, in his *Your Chance to Win*, commenting on the midshipman's expectations, agrees that the chances that two balls would hit the ship in exactly the same spot were small. But the boy "was entirely mistaken in his belief that after a ball had hit, the chance that a second one would hit in the same spot is smaller than the chance that it would hit any other spot, designated in advance." Before the battle began the odds against two balls landing on the same spot were

tremendous, "but once half the 'miracle' had been accomplished, the betting odds were immediately reduced to the odds that any indicated spot will not be hit."

During the war a German buzz-bomb came down through the exact hole in the roof of the British Museum that a previous buzz-bomb had made, and, by further coincidence, neither bomb exploded.

*That Bostonians speak the purest
English*

Miss Theresa A. Dacey, director of speech improvement for the Boston School Department, was quoted in the *Boston Herald*, for March 10, 1948, as saying that "Bostonians speak the purest cultural English of any section of the country" and that their so doing made them objects of undisguised admiration the country over. She herself, she recollected, had been "loudly applauded" by a group of New York high school students for the purity of her diction. She attributed her own and her fellow towns-

men's proficiency to their "geographic location near the ocean." "The salt in the air," she said, "makes our speech more forceful, gives it more strength."

Waiving such facts as that Bostonians are not alone in living near the ocean, that the effect of salt on the vocal cords is at best conjectural, that there are several Boston accents and that certain surly folk might be found who refuse to be enraptured by any of them, there still remains room for a little skepticism.

Philologists — at least those not born within smell of Scollay Square — maintain that in pronunciation, as in spelling and meaning, usage is the last court of appeal. There is no "correct" or "perfect" pronunciation of any language, in the absolute sense. She is solely as spoke, and by a happy dispensation most groups are inclined to regard their own particular twang or drawl or slur as divinely ordained and all deviations from it as deserving of contempt and even death. Were not forty and two thousand Ephraimites slain at the passages of the Jordan because they mispronounced the first syllable of "Shibboleth"? Did not Jack Straw and his men, roaming London during the Peasant's Rebellion, kill any man who pronounced "bread and cheese" other than they did? Did not thousands of Americans vote for Hoover because Al Smith said "raddio"?

Yet a very slight acquaintance with literature suffices to show us that some dreadful mispronunciations (by Boston's standards) have had their

day. Shakespeare rhymed "halter" with "daughter." Pope rhymed "tea" with "obey" and "join" with "line" and all his benighted contemporaries approved. Even in Boston the letter "i" in such words as "attention" is pronounced "sh," though it was not always so. The inhabitants of Baltimore refer to their beloved city as "Bal'm'r," and who shall say they are wrong? We guffaw at the cockney, but only the illiterate would pronounce the "h" in "heir," and a dash of cockneyism, in the pronunciation of such words as "humble," "hotel" and "historical" is the very touchstone of refinement.

The question of man's "natural" speech has long been agitated. James VI of Scotland sought to settle the matter by having two children reared on an island in the care of a deaf mute, and was vastly content when his emissaries reported that the children were speaking Hebrew — though it is only fair to say that no such aptitude has been manifested by any of the isolated children studied in more recent times.

James was happy because he was of the opinion that God spoke Hebrew and the children's performance bore him out. It was not for nothing that he was called "the wisest fool in Christendom." Others have not taken the problem so seriously, but there have been several minor conjectures worthy of note. "De Lawd" in *Green Pastures* spoke with a Negro accent, suggesting that the colored folk conceived of God as one of themselves.

But this, though dramatically sound, is psychologically questionable. It is more likely that God is always conceived of as belonging to the dominant group. If He no longer speaks Hebrew or Latin, He at least has a Boston accent.

That it is illegal to change your name without permission of a court

You may change your name as often as you wish if there is no intention of defrauding anyone by the change. Casanova, who went under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt, was once arrested on the charge that he was not employing his true name, and secure in his knowledge of his legal rights he answered the judge saucily that he found those eight letters idle in the alphabet and put them to use.

That it is inadvisable for a woman over 35 to bear her first child

At a time when many forces combine to delay marriages, the fear that it is extremely dangerous for a woman over 35 to bear a child for the first time has often served as a deterrent from motherhood and even marriage.

Age does add difficulty to the first labor. Women under twenty have an easier time of it, on the average, than women over 35. But not so much easier as is commonly supposed. Observations at the Woman's Hospital in New York showed that women

twenty and younger were in labor with their first child on an average of four hours and a half less than women 35 and over. At Johns Hopkins it was observed that women 35 and older averaged an hour and a half longer in their first labor than the general average. Twenty per cent of them, however, had an easy time and rapid deliveries. Dr. Guttmacher, of that institution, characterizes the common fears as "erroneous superstition" and believes that any woman "even though she is 35 or over can confidently anticipate a very happy outcome if she receives the proper type of obstetrical care."

A connected belief is that the mother's advanced age may injure the child and such cases as the hunch-backed Alexander Pope, whose mother was 48 at the time of his birth, and the scrofulous and twitching Samuel Johnson, whose mother was 40, are instanced with alarm. But the misfortunes of neither of these men can be attributed to the circumstances of their birth and, indeed, considering the obstetrical knowledge of the times, the fact that they were born at all should serve more as an encouragement than a deterrent.

That thick glassware stands the gaff

Cheap restaurants all seem to labor under the delusion that tumblers of unusual thickness will last longer than ordinary drinking glasses.

They will, of course, stand moder-

ate knocks better than delicate wine-glasses but they will shatter if dropped and, because glass is a poor conductor and expands unevenly, will break even more quickly if plunged into hot water.

Still, the average restaurateur, gazing in dismay at the month's bill for breakage, probably thinks, How much worse it would have been but for those thick tumblers!, and continues his besharded descent into the Avernus of bankruptcy.

That chivalry and courtesy are the same

Chivalry is distinguished from the disinterested kindness of pure courtesy by its ritual and the limitations of its sphere. Kindness does not confine its major exertions to attractive young women or wealthy old ones. The true nature of chivalry is evidenced by the fact that it is never practiced outside of one's marriage group. It's more a form of courting than of courtesy. No Southerner, for example, however chivalrous, would offer his seat to a Negro woman.

My learned and ingenious colleague, Professor Ennis, has suggested that modern chivalry may have even more sinister intentions, being instilled into boys by mothers in whose sexuality there is a large measure of hostility, as a means of incapacitating them later in the war of the sexes: "They drill the boys into feeling that to offend a woman . . . is to commit a mortal sin, and these boys are help-

less in mature life when circumstances dictate that they hold their own against aggressive women."

That some snakes swallow their young to protect them

No scientist has ever seen a snake swallow her young to protect them from danger, though, according to the late Raymond Ditmars, it seems to be a common observation among laymen, from whom he had many "eye-witness" accounts.

If any other explanation of their testimony than mendacity is needed it might be that they had seen a snake disgorge a smaller snake which it was eating. But the formation of snakes' teeth makes even this unlikely.

That a man may keep a savage dog to attack trespassers

One sometimes sees "Beware of cross dog" or "Beware of savage dog," or "fierce dog," or whatever other sort of dog the property owner feels will be effectively menacing. But these are either hollow warnings or indications of unlawful intent, for a man (says *Prosser on Torts*, p. 442) "may not intentionally keep a savage dog for the purpose of attacking a mere trespasser." A trespasser is a wrongdoer but he is not an outlaw, and intentional battery may not be committed upon him with impunity. (The dog, however, is, in the quaint language of the law, "privileged" against a felonious intruder.)

THE BALTIMORE SUNPAPERS

BY MARY H. CADWALADER

EVER since the Baltimore *Sun* was founded, 112 years ago, Baltimoreans have been engaging in sharp polemics about its merits. To some of them the paper is almost sacred: it is upright, decent, conservative, tolerant, honest, and, since it is nationally famous, as much a source of civic pride as the city's widely touted seafood. To other citizens it is pompous, lordly, smug and devious.

However, a good many people in the second class read the *Sun* regularly. Whatever Baltimoreans think of the paper's editorial policies — and opinions become violent on this point — they have to read it if they want to know what is going on in their own city. When a paper is read by its enemies, as the *Sun* is, there are never any questions about its future: it is here to stay.

The *Sun's* chief attraction to most of its readers is its emphasis on local news. The back page of every issue is given over almost entirely to a detailed résumé of the political, social, intellectual and athletic events of Baltimore's previous day. After hastily scanning the world news on page

one, most readers tend to turn the paper around to the "second page one" and see what has been going on in their community. In a city where an overworked transit system makes the rush hour especially crowded, this policy of printing all the really interesting news on the first and last pages, which can be read without much elbow space, is regarded as an important virtue.

This acknowledgment that news of their own community and its immediate neighbors is paramount to readers was the cardinal policy of the *Sun's* founder. Arunah Shepherdson Abell, a journeyman printer who invaded Baltimore in 1837, ignored the high-flown politics and flowery discussions that other editors featured, and featured what they ignored — city council doings, street riots, police cases. His *Sun* has been, successively, a one-man paper, a family paper, a newspaperman's paper, and finally, today, almost a machine paper, but his precept has never been forgotten. News of Baltimore and Maryland gets careful attention.

The austere morning *Sun*, its more

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youthful and light-minded afternoon counterpart, the *Evening Sun*, and the buxom *Sunday Sun*, make up a triumvirate known simply (and, in the main, affectionately) to its public as "the Sunpapers." They do not blanket the city. Competition is offered by the Hearst-owned Baltimore *News-Post* and *Sunday American*, an outfit claiming the largest circulation in the South. But Baltimoreans pride themselves on rugged individualism, which is one reason why the Sunpapers, independently-owned, get the vote over their chain-owned rivals in prestige if not in street sales.

Nor is this prestige accorded only locally: the *Sun* has made itself an international reputation. It is quoted abroad. It is regularly studied at the White House. It has had personal tributes from Presidents, and has won a basketful of Pulitzer awards. A few years ago it topped the list of independent newspapers which the Kremlin admitted to cover the Moscow Conference; and it was also one of the select few bidden to the Royal Wedding. And if, in acquiring eminence, it has lost a shade of color and a touch of zest, its readers believe this indicates, not that paralysis has set in, but only that an understandable, even comfortable, middle-aged spread has arrived.

II

Baltimore was the nation's second largest city, a brawling and burgeoning pioneer town, when the *Sun* shed its first faint rays of "Light For All"

(to quote its motto then and since). A. S. Abell, who had seen Ben Day put out his *New York Sun*, the first penny press in an era of sixpenny dailies, took due note of its success and that of James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald*, which followed soon after. With two printer-partners, Abell saw the *Public Ledger* (now extinct) off to a flying start in Philadelphia, then moved south to introduce to Baltimore its first one-cent publication.

There were already a dozen newspapers in the city, all of them edited exclusively for the benefit of the educated classes. Abell's *Sun* was a barefoot boy in a silk-stockings district — but it flourished. He made it a commoners' sheet. It was different, and it was instantly popular. Although he was hardly a radical, Abell was forward-looking for his day, and he was to introduce, all within a few years, several new developments which were forerunners of modern journalism.

Thanks to a chance thunderstorm, the *Sun* made the first of its notable scoops in 1846, during the war with Mexico. The telegraph was only two years old. To get the war news from New Orleans, our chief Army base, Abell arranged to supplement what telegraph lines existed with an elaborate pony-steamboat-railroad-and-stagecoach express. His courier from the South, bringing news of the Battle of Matamoras, rushed into Washington a short quarter-hour ahead of the mail, and filed his dispatch hastily

from the telegraph office. It had scarcely gone on the wire to Baltimore when the thunderstorm broke. Fearing lightning damage, the man at the Baltimore end of the wire closed down his keys. When he opened up again, he found Washington had stopped sending for the night, so that the expected relay of the war news for the general public did not get through. The *Sun* was the only Baltimore journal to headline, next morning, the first American victory of the war.

A year later, when Vera Cruz was captured, Abell's plans were working better, and the *Sun* got this tremendous piece of news even before it reached the President. Informing that personage, the *Sun* broke its biggest story, and with some elation received the warm thanks of James K. Polk.

Abell, who was no lone wolf, was quick to see advantages in cooperation; he joined with publishers in New York and Philadelphia in financing a daily pony express to cut the costs of transmitting news over long distances. This paved the way toward the foundation, a year later, of the Associated Press.

By 1851 the *Sun* was a strapping adolescent fast outgrowing its breeches. A five-storied Iron Building was erected to house it, the construction principle of this then-startling novelty being akin to that used decades later when skyscrapers began to shoot up on the American horizon. Into the Iron Building's basement went Richard Hoe's revolving cylin-

drical press, the ancestor of the high-speed rumblers that now roll out ten or twelve editions a day. New York and London publishers solemnly announced that Hoe's invention would never work. They continued to announce it long after it was in steady use at the *Sun*.

With the Civil War there came, for a time, the eclipse of the *Sun*. Although Baltimore sympathized with the South, she was occupied by Union troops, and for four years chaos overtook the city. Editors were jailed on all sides, and many local newspapers fell to the executioner's blade. As a publisher, Abell faced two alternatives: to speak out and die, or to shut up and live. He chose the latter, and, like the Tar Baby of the Uncle Remus yarn, "he lay low, he ain't say nothin'."

The *Sun* kept its head when others were losing theirs, but it was badly mangled in the struggle. Like its city, crushed, fearful and tired, it settled into apathy and stodginess. Recuperation took twenty years, and the scars did not heal in thrice that time. In 1886, when Ottmar Mergenthaler, himself a resident of Baltimore, invented the revolutionary linotype machine and tried to interest Abell in it, he was turned down. Ten years passed before the *Sun* gave up hand-set type in favor of the machine.

Abell retired in 1887 on his newspaper's fiftieth anniversary, with a note of congratulation from President Cleveland in his pocket, and with three sons to carry on for him.

III

The sons patterned themselves after their father as newsmen. They could not be bribed or bought; when one of them was offered the Ambassadorship to England as a reward for backing Cleveland, he laughed outright at the notion. No decent newspaper, he firmly believed, backs a man or a cause for material rewards.

The régime of Abell's sons lasted about twenty years, and during that time the *Sun* took heart again and fought some great fights. In 1895 it waded into politics, opposed a powerful, corrupt Democratic machine in the state and city, and boosted Republicans into office. Moreover, when William Jennings Bryan came out for Free Silver in the Presidential election of 1896, the *Sun* screamed like an outraged eagle and helped carry Maryland for McKinley by the largest majority given any candidate in thirty years.

From the "Bible of the Solid South," from a paper with enormous circulation in Virginia and the Carolinas, where party desertion was heresy, this move was as startling as it was courageous. "If you see it in the *Sun*, it's so!" Fathers had been telling this to their sons for as long as they had been telling them that Republicans were black-hearted monsters. Yet here was their Bible, urging them to turn the Democrats out of office!

Nevertheless, the crusade had effect. The state's swing to local Re-

publicans broke the back of the political machine for good, and after some uneasy years in the GOP backyard the *Sun* could wander happily home to the Democratic garden, there to cultivate more able — and less corrupt — regional politicians. Thanks to its independent-press tradition, Baltimore since then (unlike Boston and Philadelphia, for instance) has not had to blush a deep purple over its civic administration.

The old Iron Building, a city landmark, breathed its last on a winter morning in 1904 when the great Baltimore fire wiped out most of the downtown area. But the *Sun* never missed an issue; with the help of the Washington *Evening Star's* plant, it was printed in the capital for two months and trundled by train to its ravaged home town.

When the Abell sons passed on, control of the paper went to a brilliant, high-handed man, C. H. Grasty by name, who swiftly organized the *Evening Sun* (1910), but almost organized himself and the stockholders into the poorhouse. Grasty never had the knack of luring advertisers. He was rampantly militant in his credo that advertisers must never be allowed to influence his news columns; the result was that the *Evening Sun* labored for years with decidedly anemic finances. Grasty fought politicians — and the Mayor of Baltimore withdrew all city advertising. He fought some local merchants — and they withdrew their ads for months at a time. Nevertheless, in a sense he

educated his enemies, who came to recognize that a publication that would knuckle down to their dictates would not be worth much, nor be of much importance as an advertising medium, in the long run. Grasty was in the thick of a battle which on a larger scale resolved and crystalized America's conception of a free press.

Some badly-needed overhauling followed Grasty's retirement, and during and after World War I the Sunpapers began to roll. The staffs of morning and evening papers became separate (and rival) entities; the page sizes, types, and column widths differed so much that many Marylanders believed the two papers were under different management. As the evening sheet began to coin more and more money, competition between them grew ferocious. If a *Sun* reporter saw a chance to scoop the rest of the Baltimore press, well and good. But if he saw a chance to scoop the *Evening Sun*, he rejoiced with unholy glee and even combined forces, if necessary, with a rival reporter to outsmart the man from his own building.

In the twenties and early thirties, the two papers' personalities came into full bloom. The *Sun* came to be soberly thoughtful; the *Evening Sun* got a reputation for erratic brilliance.

The *Sun* printed some of the best political coverage in the nation. It had exclusive rights to the copy of Britain's great paper, the *Manchester Guardian*, in this country. It also had a monopoly on "Pertinax" dispatches from Paris. Paul Patterson, who was

elected president (of the A. S. Abell Publishing Company) in 1920, and who is still at the helm today, was quick to build a foreign-correspondence section second to none; he opened bureaux at various times in New York, Paris and London for instant, on-the-scene interpretation of events. Frank R. Kent, the domestic political observer and columnist, was not then permitted to syndicate, so that editors in other cities had to keep their eyes trained on his output in Baltimore. The *Sun* columns were fearless, dignified and informative.

IV

The *Evening Sun*, meanwhile, was full of sparkle and fun. Its editorial pages were lively, argumentative, brash, given at times to the Bronx cheer, and always eminently readable. It hired the first plane ever put into newspaper service and got swift, unusual stories and photos of railroad wrecks, submarine disasters, and the like. It staged contests for the best artists' sketches, summer gardens, mutt dogs, alley cats, and country fiddlers. It offered a prize during prohibition, to anyone who could write a platform-plank which would sound "wet to the wets, and dry to the drys." It bristled with scorn and enthusiasm, by turns.

Its staff was a team led by the late J. Edwin Murphy, a gruff, bristling character whose position was second only to God in the purlieus of the *Sun* building. Once at a staff party a blackface skit was presented in which the following exchange took place:

"You says Mistuh Paul Patterson is de president ob dis here newspaper?"

"Ah says just dat. He is de numbah one man."

"You means, he is *above* Mistuh J. Edwin Murphy?"

"Yassuh, sho' is."

"Well suh, what I wan' know is, who gwine tell Mistuh Murphy dis news? Who gwine do dat?"

Murphy, directing the news department primarily, was the sparkplug and moderator for the editorial staff. His steel-trap mind and John L. Lewis eyebrows inspired awe from the janitors' basement up to Brain Alley, the editors' hallowed sanctum. Together with Henry L. Mencken, Hamilton Owens, Gerald Johnson and others, he made the *Evening Sun* crackle with life. The incoming clipping envelopes were crammed with reprints of their copy from other periodicals, far and wide.

They pricked politicians' egos with pointed gibes by a mythical letter-writer called "Oswald"; they tenderly insulted do-gooders who were forever proposing new government controls by electing them to the "More Laws Association"; they annually invited their paper's worst enemies to take free space in its columns and criticize it. They jumped vitriolically on the Ku Klux Klan, the Volstead Act and the Anti-Saloon League. With hip-hoorays they telephoned England's Grand National Steeplechase course at Aintree to see how a Maryland entry fared in the race. And with jovial hoots they formed the "Bolters League" in the Smith-Hoover cam-

paign, when prominent persons were bolting their parties right and left, and announced each new member with a flourish. They ran under the heading "Gob Humor" (still going) such ribald samples of Navy wit that hasty substitutions often had to be made after the first edition.

It was H. L. Mencken's hey-day. He bobbed regularly in and out of the *Evening Sun's* columns, where his pungent thrusts at the Bible Belt, the "Bozart," and the anti-booze fanatics, infuriated some and delighted many. When he took his verbal rapier to Maryland's rural, clan-nish Eastern Shore, he was the despair of the circulation department.

For months the circulation men would work like Trojans to build up good will and a healthy circulation in the Eastern Shore counties. All would go well for a time. Then the Sage of Baltimore would deliver one of his tirades against the mental level of "the Shore"; and inevitably, canceled subscriptions would pour in on the horrified heads of the circulation department. Feeling against Mencken has been known to run so high that Sunpapers' trucks were halted in the byways and undumped by bitter Eastern Shoremen.

But even when they disagreed violently with his opinions, the editors refused to be guilty of curbing Mencken. In 1936, however, he withdrew to devote more time to his books, and now he serves only as a member of the board of directors.

In 1938 Mencken returned briefly

to pinch hit as managing editor, and a stunt he pulled at that time has not yet been forgotten. He decided to give the readers an "Object Lesson." The entire editorial page of the *Evening Sun* was printed with only dots on it. There were 1 million dots, Mencken pointed out, and if you think a million isn't so many, look again. That, he said, is the number of Federal jobholders and bureaucrats our government (and our tax money) is supporting! Mencken created the effect with the dots by employing photo-engraving screens, and it scored quite a sensation. It would have created more of one had the dots been darker. Scores of readers thought they had only a blank page, and complained angrily that they had received marred copies. But thousands more looked closely, and got the point.

v

Mencken's retirement, Murphy's death, and the coming of World War II brought gradual changes which have left the Sunpapers today more mellow and less spicy. The distinct personalities have been merged into a uniform product. Except for headline styles, the type and format of both papers is the same. The chain-of-command is a single one at top levels, and exchanges of staff members have blunted the edges of the old rivalry.

The *Sun* still assumes the weight of foreign news and "think pieces," with John W. Owens, now semi-retired, contributing mature and

intricate columns and Dewey Fleming reporting shrewdly from Washington. The veteran cartoonist Edmund Duffy, who rang up three Pulitzer awards for his powerful pencil sketches, recently departed to the *Saturday Evening Post*, but cartoonist "Moko" Yardley, who is beloved by local readers, still caricatures the Baltimore scene with bumptious, thumb-to-nose irreverence.

The *Evening Sun* maintains its heavier headlines and lighter touch, comes in two sections with its comic-strips in a prominent spot, and features shorts, sports, and the humor of a gentle satirist, Christopher Billopp. The *Sunday Sun*, inaugurated in 1901 and now past the 300,000-circulation mark, serves up *This Week* as a supplement to its own rotogravure-magazine section, which features articles on a wide range of Maryland activities, with excellent photography; it carries the usual news of theatre, music, finance, etc., as well. With 169,000 and 197,000 circulation respectively for the morning and evening newspapers, the Sunpapers are in good health.

If some of the captivating razzle-dazzle has faded, straightforward presentation of the news remains firm as Gibraltar in the Sunpapers. In makeup they are clear-cut and neat. Their news stories are thoroughly integrated and carefully indexed. They keep advertising within rigid space limits, and allow no mad scramble of "jump" stories to be hidden on inside pages.

Errors, when they occur, are admitted openly and regretfully, and corrections are quickly printed in the same part of the paper that the mistake occurred in. This policy, when it was first set up by Patterson, produced gloomy prophesies from some, but it has worked surprisingly to the Sunpapers' advantage in upping readers' respect. There have been some classic boners on occasion — such as the caption under a farm-scene photo of wheat-threshing which pronounced that “the residue, of course, is *hay*” — but the *Sun* unbends sufficiently to join in the merriment at its own expense.

A top-heavy hierarchy of editors, managing editors and assistants now rules the office; it has been charged that the bosses outnumber the legmen two to one. Moreover, the atmosphere has turned a bit stuffy since the days when the Abells ran their business as a “genial, exclusive club.” Nowadays, editors do not mingle with lowly reporters. A story is told about a ranking editor who was asked to dinner and heard that a couple of his staff members, somewhat lower down the ladder, would also be present. He mumbled something to the effect that he really shouldn't be seen commingling with them, but that “as it was to be in the country, he supposed it would be all right.”

Aloofness, as a matter of fact, forms part of a definite policy which, outside the realm of social affairs, pays dividends. *Sun* men are not allowed to serve two masters. They can join

no organizations, sit on no boards, serve on no public committees. Thus they can rarely be charged with boosting a movement for personal reasons, and their editorials do not smack of any thumbs in civic, commercial or political pies.

The big job of executive news editor is currently held by Neil H. Swanson, an autocratic, whip-cracking mid-westerner who is a prolific writer of historical fiction on the side. Swanson keeps an alert finger on the pulse of his domain, and seems to get new enterprises rolling out as fast as though he were running a huge pin-ball machine. He organized the Sunpapers' own television station and FM broadcasting setup; WMAR-TV has been operating since late 1947. He has a full-time newsreel crew making special features daily for this outlet. Radio programs aired directly to the city's transit system will begin soon.

Once again, as in its childhood, the *Sun* is a pioneer. This winter it shocked its readers with such a frank exposé of mental-hospital conditions that an aroused public boomed through the Legislature a \$20 million appropriation for state asylums.

The organization is going to move its offices again. Its new home in a couple of years will be a building covering two city blocks; it will contain every up-to-date facility, and will cost, so the whispers go, \$5 million or more. The one-time penny tabloid has become the “old walrus of Baltimore Street,” a portly and affluent local mainstay.

AL CAPONE'S SUCCESSORS

BY JOHN BARTLOW MARTIN

IN WARM Miami Beach a seven-foot floral cross had stood beside the bronze casket; but later, to foil newspapermen and the curious, his relatives brought his body back to Chicago in secrecy, almost as though he had been a criminal; and in zero cold only a few mourners gathered in the gloom of the canvas shelter. A fire department chaplain said a few words. It was over in five minutes. As the quiet mourners, men in expensive overcoats with turned-up collars, departed hurriedly, detectives peered at them. One threatened to kill photographers. The dead man's brother kept saying to reporters, "Why don't you leave us alone?" Soon only the gravediggers remained beside the mounded, fresh cold earth. The epitaph would read:

Qui Riposa

ALPHONSE CAPONE

Nato: Jan. 17, 1899

Morto: Jan. 25, 1947

Al Capone always said he didn't "want to die in the street." He died in bed. Editorialists, pointing out that Andrew J. Volstead died the same week, composed epitaphs upon an era. In 1947, none the less, the Chi-

cago Syndicate was taking in millions of dollars and it was striving to seize control of gambling all over the United States, a move which might give it power and riches greater than Capone ever possessed. At Capone's grave the mourners were the Syndicate boys, his boys.

"The Syndicate" is commonly referred to as "the remnants" of the Capone gang. This is misleading. "Remnants" implies that the gang disintegrated, even that it lost power. Actually, many people today believe the Syndicate still controls Chicago. "The Syndicate" is shorthand for a semi-organized crowd of gunmen and gamblers, lawyers and bondsmen and politicians. Strictly speaking, only the gunmen and gamblers are Syndicate men; they hire the others. Each of the Syndicate men has his private angles, sometimes legitimate; in common they control gambling and sometimes they make common cause in other fields. "Syndicate" inspires awe. Even nightclub drunks become docile if told they are in a "Syndicate Joint." When in 1945 the police seemed unable to capture a gang of young robbers that was sticking up Syndicate

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handbooks, the Syndicate held its own investigation, just like the official police showup. Later the holdup men shot it out with detectives in the belief it was the Syndicate, not the police, who had found them; one said they'd have taken a pinch quietly but they knew if the Syndicate got them they were done for.

Nearly all the top Syndicate men today are old Capone men. Everyone knows the Chicago story of the twenties — how Big Jim Colosimo, the vice man, imported Johnny Torrio from New York about 1919 to guard him against the Black Hand, and how Torrio imported Capone to help; how, as Prohibition began, Colosimo was murdered anyway and Torrio built a booze-vice empire; how Torrio was nearly killed and Capone took over; how in the ensuing warfare hundreds were shot dead and Capone won a Cicero election with gunmen and sluggers. Chicagoans loved the twenties; they cheered when Capone arrived at a college football game; they told their country cousins how Capone toured the city in a seven-ton armored limousine; they proudly pointed out his Cicero fortress, which seven carloads of gunmen commanded by Dion O'Banion and Bugs Moran had assaulted.

On St. Valentine's Day in 1929 one of the bodies in the garage was that of a dentist who "just liked to hang around with gangsters." Moran said, "Only Capone kills like that." Capone himself once complained, with

some justice, "They blame me for everything but the fire."

One gangster said, "We're big business without the top hats." Before long they even got the top hats. Capone issued statements on business conditions, bought an island palace near Miami Beach, and talked about retiring. The Federal income tax men retired him.

But neither that nor Repeal finished his mob, by any means. It sought new rackets or cultivated old ones more intensively. Kidnaping was practiced for a time. But kidnaping became odious. And so the Syndicate took over labor unions and extorted money from businessmen. It gained control of breweries, trucking lines, juke boxes, night clubs, bottling works, catering services, cleaning, dyeing, and laundering businesses, and other service industries. And above all, gambling.

Killings became rarer. It was like the passing of any frontier. The Black Hand ways were disappearing. Many of the original musclemen were dead. Men of business acumen replaced them, like Frank Nitti, Capone's successor, an intelligent colorless man who hated publicity, ruled judiciously and firmly. Moreover, the boys seem to have felt the pressures of the thirties and forties. Flamboyance was no longer meet; the boys became respectable. They bought suburban homes with swimming pools, gentlemen's farms in northern Indiana complete with stables. They wintered at Miami Beach, took the waters at Hot Springs;

they gave convertible coupés to their mistresses, spent thousands of dollars at the best night clubs, carried big rolls of money and dressed well and kept town apartments on the Gold Coast. Some were rather charming figures. When, rarely, detectives picked them up, they protested that they were retired or in the oil business. Good detectives who knew them when they were stickup men or pimps detest them "just like any other hoods." This pains them considerably.

Labor union racketeering and the extortion of about a million dollars from movie magnates led, in 1943, to the conviction in Federal court at New York of several Syndicate leaders and to the suicide of Frank Nitti. This, like Repeal, only narrowed the field.

Loose wartime spending meant a gambling bonanza. The Syndicate's take runs into many millions a year. Even in 1941, the gambling gross in Cook County *outside of Chicago alone* was \$322,966 in *one month*. No wonder the Syndicate undertook its most ambitious scheme: To gain control of the nation's handbook business, and thence other gambling. It was this plan which, in 1946, resulted in one of the most important Chicago killings in recent years, that of James M. Ragen.

II

Chicago gambling has been "syndicated," *i.e.*, controlled by one man or a small group, at least since 1900. Mont Tennes was an early big shot, surviving alike recurrent bombings

and "drives" by citizens' committees and grand juries. Other men, including Capone, succeeded him. When pari-mutuels were legalized in 1927, an indignant Syndicate gangster sued to enjoin race tracks and charged race-horse shippers with conspiring to establish an illegal monopoly in interstate commerce. In 1946 Chicago had perhaps 500 gambling houses and nearly all of any size were owned by the Syndicate. But the handbooks depended upon a wire service, Continental Press, for their race results. Continental's president was James M. Ragen, an abstinent man of 65 who had made a fortune in a lifetime of disseminating racing news, and its Chicago outlet was *Midwest News*. This was Ragen's too. The Syndicate wanted it. First they tried to buy it. A politician told Ragen that the Syndicate would pay him \$100,000 cash and give him an interest in the business. But, said Ragen later, "Ragen got the flash he will only be in the picture as long as he teaches them how to do it and after that they will find Ragen in an alley and some spigoosh will have the job." He refused to meet Tony Accardo, alias Joe Batters, considered by some to be Nitti's successor as Syndicate head, but he finally met other top Syndicate men, Murray ("The Camel") Humphreys and Jack Guzik. They demanded 40 per cent of the Chicago proceeds of *Midwest*. He refused. They started a rival service, Trans-America. They intimidated Ragen's agents. There was political heat: the Illinois Racing Commission

forbade Ragen to send out race results from the tracks until 30 minutes after races. This enabled the Syndicate to "past-post" Ragen's customers, *i.e.*, to bet on horses which the Syndicate knew (but which Ragen's customers did not know) already had won, an obviously ruinous practice. To combat this, Ragen put men into trees and on roof tops to observe races by telescope. In Cicero, his agents found Syndicate men already installed in all the good spots. The Cicero police chief, Ragen said, told a *Midwest* man, "You are not going to operate here this year; Cicero belongs to Capone." Ragen sent *Midwest* men anyway, and the chief pinched them. *Midwest* fought him in court.

One handbook proprietor switched from Ragen's service to the Syndicate's; persuaded to switch back to *Midwest*, he said, "I will probably get killed for this." He did.

Ragen said several other bookies who refused to take the Syndicate service were killed. One of Ragen's valuable technicians went over to the Syndicate's wire service. Ragen anonymously informed the authorities that this technician was a fugitive from a 1916 criminal charge. The man was arrested. But a few days later two men pursued Ragen's car for fifteen minutes at 60 miles an hour before he reached the sanctuary of a police station. He asked for and got a 24-hour police guard. He made two affidavits telling what he knew about the Syndicate, locked them up in safe deposit boxes to be opened if he were killed,

and let the Syndicate know he had done so; he regarded this as "insurance." He also gave the State's Attorney a 25,000-word statement.

In this he said that the Syndicate "is probably as strong as the United States Army." He said Al Capone still ran it. (But Jack Guzik, who should have known, said, "Al is nutty as a fruitcake.") Ragen said that his race news business grossed \$60 million a year, that it would net \$10 million for the Syndicate. However, said Ragen, "I am going to stay in this business until they kill me." He did. Two private bodyguards were following his car down South State Street on June 24, 1946, when at the Pershing Road traffic light a delivery truck loaded with orange crates pulled alongside, the tarpaulin on the truck parted, two shotgun muzzles appeared, and two shotgun blasts tore into Ragen's car. One struck Ragen in the shoulder and arm. One bodyguard's shotgun jammed; the other opened up with a revolver. The executioners fired back as their truck pulled away. They escaped.

Ragen was not believed to be seriously injured. His family received a postcard bearing a drawing of a canary, underworld symbol for one who sings to the police; a little later, on August 14, 1946, Ragen died. A toxicological wrangle ensued: Had Ragen died a natural death of uremic poisoning or had someone finished the job with mercury? The police questioned Syndicate leaders; this didn't help. Jack Guzik said, "I am retired. There

is no Syndicate in Chicago." Mayor Ed Kelly agreed there was no Syndicate. Ragen's killers never were punished.

And by 1947 the Syndicate was enjoying the gambling boom all over the nation. Ragen's sons inherited his business but the Syndicate put its service into nearly every handbook in Chicago. It took over in Joliet, Louisville and Kansas City and cities serviced from there. In St. Louis it effected an alliance with other gangsters to fight the Ragen interests. In Des Moines, a "reform" sheriff was elected by citizens indignant at the Syndicate invasion, and a police shakeup ensued. Outside Dubuque illicit roadhouses operated openly, purportedly through Syndicate connections. Campaigning for reelection, the governor of Wisconsin, an enemy of gambling, declared that the Syndicate boys were out to get him. The Syndicate was deeply involved in northern Indiana's industrial region. And in addition to all these Midwestern operations, the Syndicate had taken over at New Orleans by means of terrorism, and in Dallas two Chicago hoodlums were indicted after attempting to open a \$14 million local branch. The Syndicate had leased wires that spanned the continent and was setting up local distribution offices.

III

It is reasonable to inquire: How can the Syndicate survive? A Chicago policeman said recently, "Stop crime?

Nothing to it. Rackets, I mean. A policeman never takes anything. It's the God damn pols." He meant the politicians. As everybody knows, organized gambling could be stopped overnight by the politicians. Indeed, it has been so stopped on occasion: The day after the Ragen affair, every gambling joint was shut tight. In 1943 a runaway Grand Jury frightened even Mayor Kelly and the Commissioner of Police; next day there was no gambling in Chicago. Soon it resumed. During 1946 there were no slot machines in the county outside Chicago until two months before the election, when they blossomed in nearly every tavern, and some saloonkeepers complained they were forced to take them. At any time at the height of Capone's power, any cop on the beat could have slapped his face and chased him out of town if Capone's political protection had been withdrawn.

As far back as 1916 it took a Federal Judge, Kenesaw M. Landis, to bring Mont Tennes into court. And it took Federal Courts to send Capone, Nitti, and many, many others to prison. Bugs Moran, so long immune in Chicago, went to Ohio a couple of years ago, descended to a payroll holdup, and was promptly sentenced to 25 years in prison. Political "clout," not personally crooked policemen, explains in part why Syndicate men are almost never convicted in Chicago. Another reason is gangland's conspiracy of silence; hoodlums take care of their own troubles. And, further, Chicago juries

won't convict one hoodlum of killing another. The Crime Commission has had a hard time convincing them that an underworld-politics tieup corrupts the body politic generally.

Certainly it demoralizes the police force. Chicago has detectives as good as those of any city. But they know better than to meddle in affairs touching their masters, "the pols." Those who do so end up blowing whistles at street intersections. "It's like buttin' your head against a stone force," said one. "I give up hollerin'. Each captain's got his squads on gambling. That's big, ain't it? Why ain't he got his squads on crime?" One handbook operator has said he pays off \$1000 a month to the Captain and the Captain's men. One hole-in-the-wall crap game has a \$300-a-month payoff. The amount and system varies by wards. Frequently the Captain is only a collection man but it is he who takes the fall when a blowup comes. Most of the money goes to the pols.

In the spring of 1947 the Republicans, sensing their first real chance in fifteen years to win a mayoralty election, tried to saddle the Democrats with responsibility for the Syndicate. It was one of Johnny Torrio's failures that he played only one side of the fence politically. Capone never made that mistake. Neither has the Syndicate. A policeman told me at the time: "Say the Republicans win this spring. The Syndicate's got lists. They'll go to the ward leader and say, 'Look, the Democrats been in, now you're in. We're cuttin' you in for

twenty-five per cent of so-and-so's handbook.' Well, the ward leader'll look kind of doubtful but he'll say okay." This indicates that it is the Syndicate which owns the politicians, not the other way around.

A Chicago patrolman's base pay is \$3480, a Captain's \$5226. Virgil W. Peterson, of the Chicago Crime Commission, points out, however, that teachers, similarly ill-paid, are not notorious grafters. He advocates a raise in police pay only if appointments are made non-political. He said recently, "There are the wrong kind of ward committeemen putting police on the force with the idea of making alliances." It was discovered that thirteen probationary policewomen were over the maximum age limit, at least one of them by seventeen years. One was the sister of an alderman and the wife of a handbook operator. Civil service has failed. Nobody knows how many policemen have bought their jobs. An alderman, Frank E. Konkowski, was sent to the penitentiary for selling police jobs. He charged men five or six hundred dollars, then neither produced the jobs nor refunded the money. One witness said, "In other words, get the dough and we'll make you a cop." If the Syndicate cuts the alderman in on the gambling profits, it owns him. If he sells a police job to a party faithful, the new policeman is not going to arrest a Syndicate man.

The average age of the Syndicate men is rising fast. Humphreys, Guzik, Accardo, Levin, Ralph Capone — all

are middle-aged. It is hard to realize that, in his heyday, Al Capone was in his twenties. The Syndicate has outlived its lusty youth. The boys are investing their money in Loop real estate. They all want to die in bed, like Al.

Capone's alliances with mobs in other cities grew naturally out of booze-running. Equally natural was the Syndicate's more recent link — racing news wires. The Syndicate hoped to move into other enterprises, as it had done in Chicago. It had considerable success in doing so in some cities, although in Chicago itself Mayor Martin Kennelly, elected in 1947, has stopped wide-open gambling. In the 1920s the mobs transformed peaceful suburban towns like Burnham and Cicero into hell-holes of gambling and prostitution. In 1947, after a Grand Jury had indicted public officials of another pleasant suburb,

Skokie, for conspiring with Syndicate gamblers, citizens asked at a public meeting "to do something" replied: "Nobody's been found guilty of anything yet. Let's let it ride until someone has." This scarcely supports the hopeful suggestion, made when Al Capone's funeral contrasted so sharply with the gaudy gangland funerals of the 1920s, that public morality has improved. True, Capone's burial was a lonely one. True, when Big Jim Colosimo was buried the honorary pall bearers included eight aldermen, three judges, two congressmen, and nearly everybody else who mattered in city politics. Yet many of those pall bearers are still top-ranking political leaders.

Methods change; the fix replaces the rub-out. But a change in funeral fashions seems no more proof of improved morality than a switch from bangs to bobby socks.

PHRASE ORIGINS—49

CHICANERY: *One plausible theory about this word, which has always puzzled etymologists, has it derived from chicane, the name of a game much like golf that was once popular in Provence. The sport, it seems, was characterized by so much bickering, jockeying for advantage, and petty dishonesty, that the application of its name to similar legal and political shady maneuvering was almost inevitable. Chicane is probably descended from medieval Greek tzyganion, a form of polo, which, in turn, harks back to chaugan, a Persian word for a polo mallet.*

LOUIS JAY HERMAN

THE STATE OF COLORADO

BY MARSHALL SPRAGUE

IF ITS men were as mighty as its mountains, Colorado would make a lot more news than it does. But Coloradans prefer things the way they are. They are prouder of their scenery (the Continental Divide), their sunshine (eight days in ten), and their mountains (52 peaks over 14,000 feet) than of anything anybody has ever done in the state. Being the roof of the nation has always tended to give Coloradans a natural feeling of superiority.

They like to think of their state doling out soil and snow water to its dependencies below. Sometimes the summer thunder rolling over the Divide seems to have a mocking sound — as of laughter, at the pretensions of Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, Southern California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, and Kansas. These states don't always seem to appreciate that much of their land was washed down to them by Colorado rains on Colorado rivers like the Rio Grande, the Arkansas, the two Plattes and the Colorado.

But Coloradans know it, and ever since the arrival three years ago of a bright, dynamic publisher named

Palmer Hoyt from the Portland *Oregonian*, they have been ramming that fact home to their neighbor states. Hoyt took over the *Denver Post*, then an impotent, messy hate-peddler in the last stages of senile decay. He went to work furiously on the *Post's* gangrenous frame, lopping off stuff that had atrophied and giving it shots of his own idealism and vigor.

His target was what he called the "Rocky Mountain Empire" — thirteen states comprising more than a third of the country. Hundreds of *Post* stories since have pounded the theme that Colorado, with Denver at the core, is destined by the laws of gravity, economics and natural leadership to rule in the coming golden age of the Rocky Mountain West. This age, according to Hoyt, will result from decentralization of Eastern industry, from cheap power and water developments that will support new populations, and from the extraction of minerals needed for defense in the atomic era.

Some laugh all this off as a wishful dream, but the arguments they trot out haven't applied since the days of the Pony Express. Colorado isn't

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arid desert and barren mountain country any more. Agricultural income, up one third in the past two years, is the basis of its economy, with incomes from manufacturing, mining and tourism following after. Water is the life-blood of these four industries, which is why Coloradans, alerted by Hoyt's tocsins, are out in force to keep strangers from filling their empty water buckets inside the state line.

Water power, irrigation and flood control — that's the talk everywhere in the state these days. Every Coloradan knows now what "diversion" means. He knows that the Big Divide bisects his state, that the western slice has more water than it can use while the eastern half hasn't enough. Engineers have tamed the Colorado River into pumping itself backwards through a thirteen-mile tunnel to serve the eastern slope. The Big Thompson at Estes Park is already receiving western water. Blue River water will be diverted into the South Platte, and another planned diversion will supplement the flow of the Arkansas. When all this western water flows east, Colorado's larger towns will have more power than they can use and the huge area now under irrigation will be doubled.

Some Eastern corporations, aware of these possibilities, are already moving this way — companies like United Airlines, Nestlé food products, and Timken Roller Bearings — and inquiries pour into the Chambers of Commerce by the hundreds. Not

long ago Colorado Springs rolled out the welcome mat for the new million-dollar home of Shepard's Citations, official printer for the legal profession. W. G. Packard, owner of the firm, moved it holus-bolus to the Springs because he was tired of operating conditions in New York, and besides, his wife didn't like the climate there.

With its ambitions matching its skyline, Colorado has amassed enough cash to give those hopes plenty of substance. Coloradans have been making money hand over fist — wheat raisers, orchardmen, cattle-growers, meat packers, distributors, oilmen, retailers and resort people. Better crop management has reduced the danger of a new dust bowl.

Deflation of the gold and silver mining which had checked growth and confused politics for forty years is just about completed. Engineers at the U. S. Bureau of Mines' Rifle demonstration plant, claim that there is enough recoverable fuel in Colorado oil shale to supply the nation's fuel needs for one hundred and fifty years. Claude K. Boettcher, the state's leading industrial magnate, who never picked a wrong horse in his life, has doubled the output of his Ideal Cement Company, which supplies the Rocky Mountain region. Governor Lee Knous regularly sets up state-wide citizens' committees for the improvement of some service, the effect of which is to speed up cooperation between Colorado cities.

Absentee ownership is still large, but its character has changed so much

that Coloradans feel they own the state once more. The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad, a prime factor in the state's growth since the road was founded in 1871, is now run by Colorado and Utah men under Wilson McCarthy. Boettcher has led the reorganization of the old absentee Public Service of Colorado. Carl Meyers, head of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation, Western-run but Eastern-owned, has been promising publicly that from here on the firm will be run for Colorado's good.

Not that Coloradans haven't been doing a little absentee ownership themselves. Boettcher's Potash Corporation of America in New Mexico has become one of the world's largest. American Crystal and Holly Sugar have properties all over the Northwest. Two of the four transcontinental truck lines between Chicago and the West Coast are Denver-owned. Oilmen like Thomas A. Dines, head of Denver's oil axis, have a big stake in Wyoming wells.

II

Colorado is one of the pleasantest places in the world to live, especially the fertile, two-hundred-mile belt where the mountains meet the plains. All but one of the state's larger cities and three quarters of its million-plus population are in this belt.

Colorado's sun is strong enough to keep one tanned all winter. Summers are cool and winter days are often mild enough to go picnicking. This balmy weather tends to make Colo-

radans relaxed, healthy and disinclined to work themselves into a lather over anything. "Tis a privilege," the slogan runs, "to live in Colorado."

From his bedroom window the upland Coloradan can get a mighty thrill any morning watching the sun strike a snowcapped 14,000-footer. A housewife can hang up her Monday's wash at noon and take it down dry an hour later, sun or no sun. More than a fifth of the state's area is reserved for the public as national parks, national forests or city parks, a condition which spurs people to spend plenty of time outdoors. The towns teem with nature clubs, ghost-town clubs, Izaak Walton chapters, and small groups probing everything from cacti to rattlesnakes.

The scenery and climate lend an air of drama to almost everything the Coloradan does, whether he is taking five minutes to soft-boil a four-minute egg or watching plum-sized August hailstones tear through his roof. He can drive in an hour from Colorado Springs (6000 feet) to the top of Pike's Peak (14,110 feet), passing through the same vegetation zones he would meet traveling 2000 miles north. Around Denver lies fertile farm country; southwest of Pueblo are sand dunes fit for a camel.

The same goes for people. A French countess in a Christian Dior bonnet orders *Perrier-Jouet* in a Springs night club, while a grimy migrant worker gulps rot-gut in a Trinidad pub. The meat-packing Poles of

Denver's Globeville live in quarters as crowded as New York's lower East Side; the rural Scotch-Irish residents of Baca County are four miles from their nearest neighbor.

Of course, the picture also has its dark side. When you ask the average Coloradan what's wrong with the state he will look a little puzzled, then a little angry, and at last he may mumble: "Nothing much — unless it's just that we've got too many Kansans living here."

Colorado's roads are terrible in places. Its public schools are maintained solely by local taxpayers, with the result that many rural schools are fifty years behind the times and their teachers earn less than sheep-herders. Rural health services are poor.

In the cities, discrimination against Negroes and Spanish-Americans is common, though recent court decisions have forbidden it in public establishments. To counter these decisions, one Colorado Springs night club for a time kept its empty tables covered with fake drinks.

In their state affairs, Coloradans generally tend toward an enlightened conservatism. Communism, for instance, is so feeble that its sole sympathizing newspaper, *Challenge*, had to fold. (The *Denver Post* took the liberals away from it.) With a circulation of 300,000, Hoyt's *Post* is by far the state's most influential newspaper. It is slowly breaking down Colorado's isolationist attitudes. It is for labor, the Marshall Plan and the Missouri Valley Authority. It makes

a serious effort to give its readers comprehensive information on national and world problems — something not many of the state's papers have done in the past.

The *Rocky Mountain News*, Denver's entertaining morning tabloid, has boosted its circulation from 80,000 to 113,000 under the vigorous guidance of Jack Foster and his wife, Frankie. The paper is liberal and public-spirited, and does an able job under the budget restrictions imposed on it by its Scripps-Howard owners, who don't take much interest in it.

In a class by itself is the weird Colorado Springs *Gazette-Telegraph*, owned by R. C. Hoiles. Hoiles, who has six other papers in his stable too, is probably the only newspaper publisher in the United States crusading for the abolition of public schools, municipal fire departments, national forests, and the U. S. Post Office. (He gives a grudging approval to police departments and public streets.)

III

The complacency which has hampered the state's development since World War I has not yet been entirely eliminated. But there is much less of it now, mainly because of the shift of political power from heavy-footed hack politicians to liberal leaders like Governor Knous, Democratic Congressman John Carroll, and Denver's up-and-coming 37-year-old mayor, Quigg Newton. Another force for progress is the influx of critical new-

comers who have insisted on better civic services.

Complacency may explain the relative tranquility of the state's labor relations. Colorado has had its bloody strikes. Historically, the American labor movement owes much to the five-month strike of the Western Federation of Miners at Cripple Creek in 1894 for a \$3-a-day wage, and a second long Cripple Creek strike in 1904, both lost battles in which many men were killed and mines dynamited. But today strikes are bloodless and sporadic. Though wages are lower than in the East, union leaders are cautious about getting them raised. One union chief told this writer: "We can never be sure how far the men will follow us — because they're too damned satisfied with the way they live. Any Denver workingman making a measly \$45 a week can afford to own a little shack up in the hills where he can catch trout or bag a deer in the fall. He hasn't the time or incentive to back a real strike."

In national affairs, the Colorado picture is mixed. For one thing, Colorado is a "yes-and-no" state. Democratic and Republican voters do not follow party lines. Since statehood in 1876, the state has had thirteen Republican governors, nineteen Democratic governors. It has gone Republican in nine national elections, Democratic in nine.

Big Ed Johnson, Democratic Senator since 1936, is an amiable, popular, errand-boy type of politician, with a genius for backing both sides of any

issue. He opposed military training right up to Pearl Harbor, after which he advocated an air force so huge that it couldn't be raised on a voluntary basis. He was against Russian world domination, but saw "very little merit in the Marshall Plan." Eugene Millikin, the Republican junior Senator, is an old guard wheelhorse who has, nevertheless, come to hold the respect of almost everybody. He is a good orator, able to talk around a subject for an hour with seeming profundity yet without committing himself. In general, he favors a balanced budget, strong national defense, and less bureaucracy.

The Democratic governor, lanky, smiling Lee Knous, seems like a ball of fire compared to most of his predecessors. More than any other politician, he has sparked public interest in the critical water problem and has built numerous fires under somnolent public officials, many of whom have actually felt the heat and gone to work. Knous is bitterly opposed by ultra-conservatives.

Denver, the capital and largest city (with 400,000 residents) of Colorado, sprawls on the plain some thirty miles east of Mount Evans. It is lusty, gusty, good-natured and kind, like a woman who isn't too refined but can always be counted on to give a man whatever he wants when he wants it. Visitors have spread its vigorous attractions around the world. Its modernity and obsolescence are charmingly mixed. The sleek airliners and streamlined trains

roaring in every minute contrast with the high-hipped tram cars straight out of the nineties. There are new solar homes on the outskirts; in the city many of the homes are ugly and squat.

Culture has hard going in Denver; it can't compete with the daily cattle run at the stockyards or the convention bookings at the Visitors' Bureau. Saul Caston, who bludgeoned the wealthy into giving him a good symphony orchestra, keeps it in favor with his summer programs of light classics. The Central City Opera House is a sellout for three weeks in July, but the customers come to town at least as much to get boiled in the Glory Hole as to hear opera. Caleb Gates, the educator, complains that Denver University is in danger of becoming no more than a football team with trade school attached.

Not that Denver hasn't got fine artists, writers and teachers. And that indefinable something in the air still goes on breeding fine acting talent. It's just that the city has so little time for anything that isn't solid and material. The well-heeled have clubs, restaurants, the Brown Palace Hotel, and gay, loud parties. The down-at-heel go for sports, ward politics and religion. But rich and poor alike prefer Denver to any other place they know.

IV

Nothing bothers Denver much, not even its massive rat problem; but if it has a phobia at all, it is the suave

little city one tenth its size nestling at the foot of Pike's Peak, some 75 miles away. Colorado Springs is where Denverites sneak off when they want to put on the dog. It is everything Denver isn't — a tidy, flossy place with wide streets and considerable evidence of good taste and poise.

From the time General William J. Palmer laid it out in 1871, Colorado Springs has had a cosmopolitan population accustomed to life's snazzier accessories. People have been playing polo there for seventy years, and some of its wine cellars can turn up anything from *Chateau Ausone* to *Tokay* 1868. A native of Philadelphia shot himself a few years ago because he couldn't get elected to the Colorado Springs Cooking Club. The city supports droves of interior decorators, and one of its mansions looks like Marie Antoinette's Petit Trianon. It has a large quota of retired generals, many civic-minded women's clubs, and a few nervous "patriots" who amuse themselves mumbling about socialism, Jews, and New Deal Democrats. It also has a large chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Pueblo, the state's second largest city, is wrapped up in steel and railroads. But Grand Junction, a bustling, rose-decked orchard center, is a city with a future. New freeze processes have boomed the fruit business there, and the town also has a big stake in the Rangeley oil fields. Few communities in the state are growing faster.

Is Colorado really going places?

Will it harness its power, double its irrigated land, mine its atomic and other defense materials, build a balanced industry independent of the East? Will it be able to triple its population?

Nobody knows. Solving the water problem will take time and money — as well as more cooperation between Colorado cities, between Colorado and neighboring states, and between Colorado and the Federal government. Then there is the hurdle of

taxes. Colorado has one of the most generous — and costliest — old-age pension plans in the country. High taxes make it possible; but is it wise for the state to keep the old in style at the expense of better education for the young?

These problems are real and pressing, but they don't shake the Coloradan's optimism. He knows in his bones that Colorado today faces the brightest prospects it has ever had. And what state can match those 52 big peaks?

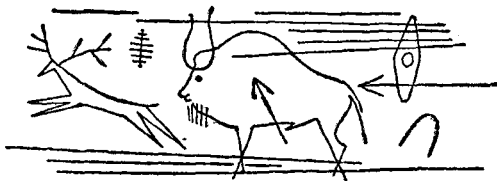
HILL TOWN

BY KAYE STARBIRD

I bear my malice toward the hopeless hills
That lean their weight against the fickle sky,
Knowing the sullen smoke forever fills
The valley where the restless trains go by.
There in the endless monotone of rain
The coils of river moodily unwind,
And darkness is a slowly spreading stain
Where the lost street lamps falter and grow blind.
Once, being young, I thought I saw a star
Flash to the river. I could hear it gutter
With a soft sound like wind in a guitar.
I looked too long that night into the water
Ever again in kindness to forgive
The place where stars would die and men still live.

DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



BUTCHER-BIRD

AS EVERY writer of fiction and drama knows, a powerful and clear-minded character, bent upon violence however bloody, does not make an effective villain. The simple and single-minded murderer, red-handed and glad of it, may inspire a kind of awe and produce a response of plain fright. But such a killer does not properly "make the flesh creep." He does not give that special shudder, that horrid shivering along the spinal column, that is wanted.

For *that* effect, what we must have is not a clear-minded man but a murky-minded one. Rather than strong, he may better be snivelling. Rather than noisy with menace, he may better be eerily quiet. What we want is somebody twisted and queer. We want a personality off key. Give us *that*, and the audience can be made more deliciously uneasy than by any amount of straightforward knife-waving and revolver shots.

Part of the pattern of life is killing, and we early become reconciled to

killers who go strongly and efficiently about their business of annihilation. They may scare us, by their grim activities, but it is just a plain wholesome scare, as natural as our being scared by fire or falling rocks. They don't strike a crawling dread into our vitals. Thus a figure of evident strength and bloody-mindedness, like a Nazi general or admiral in the late war, never seemed half so disturbing a figure as the sly little intellectual — all mincings and goblin-smiles and hand-rubbings — whose name was Dr. Goebbels. Or again, the hard-drinking stevedore who in a rage fells one of his pub-cronies and fractures his skull is obviously an intimidating fellow but he is not, exactly speaking, a dreadful one. He represents expectable violence. When our hackles rise and the palms of our hands begin to sweat is when we come across the gentle little suburban dentist, all quietness and yes-dear and love of gardening, who invites his wife in an affectionate whisper into the cellar to see the new concrete-work he has been doing, and then . . .

It is necessary for our peace of mind to have life fall into patterns and predictabilities. Let killers look and act like killers, and we are prepared to deal with their existence calmly. Let the rain fall as rain, and oak-trees be oaks, and we are serene in the sureness of things. But when (as sometimes happens) the rain drips in gout of dreadful red, it is suddenly behaving like something else — like blood — and we are undone; and when an oak tree glimpsed over our shoulder in the moonlight suddenly appears, as it sometimes does, to be a towering creature with crooked arms in wild pursuit of us, we are paralyzed with what the Scots call a *grue*. The merely brutal we may confront with equanimity. What snaps the nerve is the grotesque.

All this, no doubt, is the reason why we may be given such an odd feeling by the quiet-colored little bird that is common enough in country life and that is called a shrike. In popular language its name is butcher-bird. It is a good name.

No one but the most neurotic is upset by the predatory behavior of hawks. In every detail of its superb equipment a hawk is clearly a killer, as clearly so as a tiger or a lithe ocelot. To see a hawk wheeling and crying and peering at the earth far below in search of a stir of prey is to see something splendid. The power of the great wings . . . the keenness of the hunting eyes . . . the crook of the tensed talons . . . this is a predator, every inch and muscle, and it is satis-

fying and beautiful. We may wince a little as the bird stoops in its tremendous dive, sure and relentless as the angel of death; we may wince again to hear the scream of the rabbit as its spine snaps. But it is all an affair of power and purity. There is a cleanness in it, a rightness. We can exult with a hawk. But even naturalists, even veteran ones, are sometimes moved to an uneasiness by shrikes.

A shrike appears to be — indeed is — a songbird. It is not any bigger than a robin, and it is colored in bluish grays and white, rather like a mockingbird. It sings a pleasant low-voiced caroling song, full of little chucklings and “asides,” as a brown thrasher does, and its nest is daintily lined with rootlets, feathers and fine grasses. A shrike has the typical gentle little feet of a perching bird. A facial strip of black, like a tiny mask, sets off the dove-gray of its feathers and gives the bird a special look of neatness, trimness, demureness: a kind of endearing kitten-quality. This is the way a shrike looks and sounds; and this is what can give a man a “cauld *grue*.”

For a shrike is a bloodier killer than a hawk. It has neither the size nor the equipment for massacre; but it has the will. Only the shrike’s beak — hooked, notched and toothed — is serviceable as a death-instrument; but a shrike, under its soft feathering, is full of a fury, and it makes do with that. Its gentle song can change in a moment to a shrill shrieking. It can fling itself upon any bird as big as itself, or bigger, and kill it with a fumbling frenzy.

II

Quietly a shrike perches on a telephone wire, or a high lookout twig in a tall tree, and twitters its soft little song to itself, and watches. It watches for the stir of a big insect, like a grasshopper, or of a mouse or a sparrow or any bird up to bluejay size. If nothing stirs, and the shrike is hungry — and shrikes are commonly hungry — it may stop its cheerful little tune and venture on an expert mimicking. There issues from its gray-white songbird's throat a plaintive squeaky mewling: the sound of a baby bird in distress. Louder it comes, more urgent. It will fetch most of the songbirds in a neighborhood, every time.

Watchful, the shrike eyes them and makes a selection. That plump sparrow, perhaps, over there in the maple sapling. A small gray shadow, shadow-quick, the shrike slips from its perch and rushes at its prey.

A shrike is fast; but so is a terrified sparrow. Hardly ever can a shrike make a clean pounce, as a hawk does. There begins a long and terrible pursuit.

Having no talons like a hawk's, a shrike must beat its prey to earth. It must catch up with it, and then with a final burst of speed rise above it, and then come down on top of it and smother it to the ground. In its initial rush, the shrike tries to force the sparrow as close to earth as possible, and then pursues it at top speed just above ground-level. The chase has a kind of nightmare quality: so absurdly near

the ground, so queerly horizontal, and so wildly erratic. The fleeing sparrow twists, turns, dodges around bushes, fence-posts, anything. With incredible intentness the shrike follows instantly every dodge and twist. The birds flash zig-zag, a foot or so above the earth, the shrike rising and putting on added speed each time the sparrow tries to rise, forcing him earthward again. Out of the shrike's throat now comes something not at all like its pretty songbird's song. This is its murder noise. It sounds something like *Keeeeeeeeee!* One ornithologist has said that it sounds rather like the thin shrill blowing of a child's tin whistle. It does; and the terror of the chase is the greater for the preposterousness. It is not when a murderer shouts and roars that we feel the *frisson* of the ultimately horrible. It is when he giggles.

A final twist and dodge and rush of speed, and the shrike rises a few inches above the sparrow, drops on him with flailing wings, and bears him clumsily to earth, the two birds in a tumbled heap. The shrike's weak feet cannot strike a death-blow, nor are they strong enough to carry off the struggling sparrow alive. There is a tussle, the shrike beating and clubbing the sparrow's head with its hooked beak, hooking and tearing at it. Presently the sparrow has been bludgeoned and ripped to death.

The shrike gathers up the body and flies laboring away. Where it flies is to its larder.

This is most commonly a thorn-tree. Perching there with its burden,

the shrike shifts and maneuvers the body until it rests against the point of a long, strong thorn. With a heave and a push the shrike skewers the sparrow as a butcher skewers a chunk of meat on a meat-hook. The sparrow is manageable now, even for a small gray songbird with passerine feet. The shrike may eat him at once, or he may only sever the head and daintily pluck out the lungs. Or he may not eat at all. Shrikes kill to store. They also apparently kill, sometimes, just because killing is their life. A single shrike's larder in a thorn-tree may number half a dozen bodies or more, the shrike merely nibbling at them a little, as fancy dictates. Or occasionally the larder may be stocked and packed like this, and then the shrike may never visit it again. The impaled bodies rot away untouched.

Thorn-trees are not as numerous now as they once were in many parts of shrikes' territory. But the dapper little butcher-bird has taken readily to the use of a modern invention. It has adopted the use of barbed wire fences. It can spike a cicada or a sparrow or a white-footed mouse as effectively on the galvanized points as on the natural ones. Even when thorns and barbed fencing are both absent, the shrike still has its method for sparrowing the larder. It jams the sparrow between two twigs close together,

and secures the body by twisting and twining one of the frail legs as a man might twist a wire.

A naturalist in his senses knows quite well that all life, without exception, feeds upon other life. This is the pattern of things; and there is no more impropriety in a fox's gobbling a pheasant than in a trout's gobbling a worm or a worm's gobbling a particle of vegetation. The natural world is full of killing, as it is full of birth, play, happiness and fulfillment. There are no "murderers" in it, rightly speaking, nor wilful cruelty, nor dark twists of the psyche. There should be no reprehending of shrikes, for doing a thing as altogether natural to them as a small boy's taking an apple from an orchard.

No. No, of course not.

All the same, that little tin-whistle cry of *Keeeeeel* is a queerish thing to hear. That funny, fumbling, implacable flight . . . that smothery pounce, and all the clubbing and beating and tussling . . . all those little impaled bodies, skewered in the thorn-tree, with their heads pulled off. . . .

It is not too difficult to keep in mind the rightness and soundness and sunniness of things when it is only hawk-wings that flash, and only those sure, strong talons that strike and kill. The test of a philosopher is shrikes.



THE ARBITRARY VALUES OF MANKIND

BY CLELLAN S. FORD

OUR friends and acquaintances share most of our likes and dislikes. We accept people as congenial companions primarily because they enjoy living as we do. Although each of us may value something to which others attach little importance, most of us agree on basic interest. Agreement on fundamental issues extends beyond the circle of our personal contacts to the members of our society. As Americans we have a large number of values in common.

Life consists of striving for values and enjoying those that are successfully attained. The energy we are willing to expend depends upon the importance we attach to the goals we seek. The amount of effort we invest in attaining these goals colors our attitude toward those who seem disinterested in what we feel to be important. Since most of us more or less agree on the majority of our values, we tend to consider them as inevitable, as natural characteristics of mankind. We tend to assume that if people do not value what we do they are definitely queer and abnormal.

There are good reasons for thinking

that someone living in our society is peculiar if he fails to appreciate what other persons value. But this differs from the view that our values are absolute and an inevitable part of human nature. There is little question about some intrinsic values. Good food, perfect health, and freedom from anxiety are examples. But many of them are arbitrary. What seems most important to one generation may fail to arouse a glimmer of interest in the next. What seems valuable to us may seem trivial to the members of another society. These differences result from varying conditions of life. They do not reflect a lack of innate ability to appreciate what we find through experience to be important.

Money has value in our society. People strive for dollars because, with money, they may purchase other valuables. Considering the great usefulness of money, it is not surprising that people should come to regard money-making as a goal in itself. But most of us recognize that the usefulness of money fluctuates. We know that the dollar is worth less during an

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inflation than under other economic conditions. During the war members of our armed forces discovered that money may have no value at all. When the Marines first arrived in the Solomons, the natives valued a package of cigarettes more than they did a ten-dollar bill. Some Marines took this simply as one more indication of the ignorance of the savages, but many were shocked to discover that United States currency has no intrinsic and universal value. The careless way in which large sums were gambled away by our troops and the often-repeated phrase "it's only money" were reflections of this discovery. Of course, the natives of the Solomons soon learned the trade value of dollar bills and before long began to appreciate the importance of these pieces of paper. But the arbitrary value of money is pretty clear cut. Currency has value only in a society like our own where it can be exchanged for other valuables.

While most of us appreciate that paper money and coins lack intrinsic value, it may be a novel idea to some that many other values which we take for granted are equally arbitrary. A widely accepted principle in our society is that the life of the individual person is sacred. We attach so much importance to the right of the individual to live that the most severe sanctions at our command are levied against any tendency to kill a fellow-citizen. Regardless of such circumstances as the torture of hopeless cancer or the vegetation of feeble-mind-

edness, the person must be kept alive at any cost. The only instance in which a human life may justifiably be taken is when that person, by destroying the life of another, has himself forfeited the right to live.

This whole-hearted appreciation of the individual human life is not universal. It is the product of the special life conditions under which we have lived. Other conditions produce different attitudes. Were we living the rigorous life of the Polar Eskimo, infanticide would not hold the horrors for us which it has today. Were we Spartans whose very existence depended upon the strength of its young men and the absence of weaklings, we would not tolerate institutions for those born so deficient that they handicap a society in its struggle for survival. The importance of the life of the individual is not a universal and given fact. It is not an inevitable and absolute human value. Perhaps a hundred, or even fifty, years from now, circumstances may so alter cases for our descendants that this particular value may become greatly modified.

II

A widely accepted motive in our society is sexual jealousy. In movies and in novels we encounter the familiar theme of a man, or perhaps a woman, going to extreme lengths to punish a sweetheart who has a lover, or to eliminate a rival. Related to this are the premiums we place upon the faithfulness of the partner in marriage and

(ideally at least) upon the virginity of the bride. To be sure, ideals of conduct are not always followed in practice, as recent fact-finding surveys indicate. Nevertheless, the ideals are there. Sexual jealousy continues to be aroused, and our culture permits a startling display of outraged dignity and aggression when the unsuspecting spouse discovers a departure from the ideal.

Even as ideal values, sexual jealousy, insistence upon virginity, and the faithfulness of a spouse, are not universal human characteristics. They are clearly the products of specific life conditions and are restricted to certain types of social life. They are thus arbitrary. Should our life conditions change, there is every reason to believe that these values would also change.

It might become customary in our society for both husband and wife to have access to other sex-partners. This is not uncommon in other societies. Perhaps out-doing our own smart set, the Masai of Africa and the Kiwai Papuans of New Guinea practice wife-lending as an expected gesture of hospitality. To them this is simply a matter of being a good host to one's guest. Or, instead of dancing with one another's wives, we might practice wife-exchange for a night or two as do the Chukchee of North Asia and the Nama Hottentots of South Africa. (Perhaps even more difficult to imagine) we might place *greater* value upon marital chastity than we do at present, and, like the

Trobrianders of the Pacific or the Jivaro of Amazonia, punish the unfaithful wife and her lover with death.

The value of virginity may range from one end of the scale to the other. Among the Rifians, a girl who fails to pass the virginity test at the wedding ceremony is liable to be killed by her brother or her father, since she has considerably lessened her value in bride-price terms. In others, as among the Pukapukans, a woman is much more desirable as a bride if she has already borne a child (the father doesn't matter), thus demonstrating her fertility to the anxious suitor.

A particularly interesting and variable set of values centers about the prevailing notions of feminine pulchritude. That these are somewhat arbitrary and change with the times is apparent within the history of our own Western-European culture. The hour-glass figure of the nineteenth century gave way to the protuberant bustle and the hobble-skirt. The flapper with her short skirts and straight lines was followed by longer skirts and the flat-chested boyish figure. Curves are now becoming fashionable. Legs have appeared and disappeared as dresses shortened and lengthened. The rash of platinum and henna heads came into vogue and rapidly disappeared. Long and short hair are each fashionable in their day. The use of powder, rouge and lipstick vary both as to quantity and purpose of application. But such changes as these in matters of figure, dress and physical beauty are relatively limited in scope.

They oscillate between narrow limits. Regardless of variations in style, our ideal of beauty includes such fundamentals as white, clean teeth, a well-groomed appearance, luxuriant hair and a well-proportioned figure.

Ideals of beauty are not the product of natural or innate appreciation. Other people have quite different notions of what a beautiful woman should be like. Trobriand Island women, for example, strive to beautify themselves by shaving their eyebrows, blackening their teeth, and painting their faces in black, red and white. The more a face resembles in its bony structure that of a horse, the more beautiful it appears to the Kirghiz of Mongolia. Ideals of beauty occasionally demand alterations of the bodily form, such as binding the foot and the use of corsets and breast flatteners. Distending the ear lobe, the nostril or the lips by inserting large plugs and discs is not uncommon. Mutilations in the name of beauty foreign to our taste include elaborate tattooing of the face and body and deliberate scarification. But cutting the hair, which would horrify the members of many other societies, has enjoyed amazing popularity in the United States!

III

Industriousness has a value among middle-class Americans that places it high in their hierarchy of virtues. Work is not merely a means to other valuables, it is an end in itself. Whether he be a salesman, a business

executive or a lawyer, the industrious and hard-working person is one to be admired. Work is a value in and of itself, and taking a vacation is something of a sacrilege. That industriousness is an absolute and necessary value the middle-class American is completely convinced, and he will defend his point of view with consistent, if irrelevant, rationalizations. While this attitude is useful to the workings of our society, it is not an inevitable one. Industriousness is not a natural human value. Even within our own society there are classes of people to whom work is simply a means to an end and something to be avoided if at all possible.

Outside of our society, industriousness is rarely conceived to be a value in itself. For most peoples, recreation and play are the goals toward which people strive, performing their necessary tasks with as little effort as possible, so that they will have more energy to enjoy their leisure time. It is said of the natives of the Pacific that they have the highest standard of leisure in the world. Because of this, wherever the industrious white has wanted to hire people to help him exploit the resources of the islands, he has had to import Asiatics or other laborers who place less value on leisure.

The freedom which we prize so greatly, with its concomitant rights of equality, worshipping God in the fashion we choose, voting and free speech, seems to be a natural human value. The people who lack this freedom must be terribly unhappy. We

envision them as pressing their noses to the glass in great envy of what they observe in our society. But a desire for freedom as we define it is not universal. People brought up in a different type of society, in which the forms of worship are strictly prescribed and where sharing in the decisions of the government or voicing opinions about affairs of state are not tolerated, do not necessarily appreciate the value we place upon freedom. They may be quite happy in terms of their own value system. The Fijians, living in a society where the word of the hereditary chief was law, rarely were disturbed by their lack of freedom. On the other hand they were greatly amazed to discover, *via* the missionary, how very restricted European life is from their own point of view. The necessity of wearing clothes while in swimming, the taboos on various pleasurable dances and sex practices, the insistence upon going to school, the eight-hour working day — all these are intolerable to them. How can the white man stand these infringements of personal liberty? Nor do some people take social inequality as much to heart as most of us do in our society. Ralph Linton, the anthropologist, tells an amusing story about the Samoans after World War I which well illustrates this point. Australian officials informed the Samoans that the natives were now to be treated as equals, and not as inferiors, as they had been by the Germans who formerly governed their islands. The Samoans were taken

aback. Finally, a chiefly delegation informed the Australians that the Samoans would not take kindly to being governed by a people no better than themselves!

IV

If all our values were examined from this point of view, we would discover that most of them are variable and arbitrary. Our particular constellation of values is not duplicated for any other people on earth. The value system of each society has peculiar features which differentiate it from all others. Moreover, the values which characterize each society are in a state of flux. They are continuously changing, so that with each successive round of overlapping generations, conspicuous differences in values become noticeable.

There is a strain toward consistency, to use Sumner's phrase, in the values of any society. Integrative principles are at work which tie values to one another in a system or pattern within each culture. This tendency toward an integrated system of values rarely achieves an adjustment in which conflicting values are eliminated or modified to produce a harmonious equilibrium. But even in a rapidly changing society like our own, the value system is so integrated that it would be impossible to introduce many alien values. It seems highly unlikely, for example, that black teeth would ever be acceptable to us as a mark of beauty.

There are, of course, some values

which are cross-culturally universal and stable within each society. In all societies and in every generation, food and drink, rest for the weary, good health, sexual gratification and relief from anxiety are highly valued. No society survives in which babies fail to elicit sufficient love and interest to insure their protection, care and education. Social control, division of labor and cooperative effort inevitably have their place in the hierarchy of values. Such values as these rest squarely upon human nature and general life conditions. These interests have always characterized human culture and, as long as mankind survives as a species, they will be an integral part of all human value systems.

Upon a basic platform of values common to all mankind, each society has developed interests in accordance with the special conditions of its existence. A people whose past has involved continuous aggressive warfare value courage and bravery to an extent impossible in a society where ages of peaceful trade have permitted the shrewd merchant to achieve a position of great prestige. Monogamy cannot be accepted as a value in a society where prestige and wealth are measured in terms of the number of wives a man can support.

Each person is born as a member of a society which has its characteristic culture and system of values. As he matures he becomes a bearer of that culture and its values. An American or an Eskimo or a Russian ac-

quires the values of the society in which he is educated. For each person, the major determinants of the interests he manifests as an adult are the cultural conditions of his existence. He learns these values as he learns to live as a member of his society. Individual differences enter in to bend the interest slightly this way or that, and unique experiences give rise to further variation, but by and large the values held by the members of any society depend upon the cultural heritage — the traditional values which characterize the parental generation. Indeed, if a person fails to adopt the value system of his society he becomes abnormal in the eyes of his fellow men.

When the member of any society discovers that the values and interests which he shares with his friends and acquaintances are not universal human attributes, he is likely to be both shocked and annoyed. He concludes that people in societies where alien value systems prevail must be primitive, depraved or insane. Or perhaps they are in the grip of some harsh social system which has smothered their natural desires and interests. It is somehow very difficult to realize that many of one's own values are arbitrary in the sense that they depend upon past and present life conditions. Yet this is precisely what has been demonstrated by the sciences of man. We must, therefore, be prepared to encounter changes in values from one society to another and even, in time, within our own society.

THE LIBRARY



ON AMERICAN LITERARY HISTORY

by CHARLES ANGOFF

THE writing of history, at its best, is a noble and most exacting art, demanding from its practitioners a combination of qualities that is very likely even rarer than that demanded from the practitioners of any of the other literary arts. There are fewer good general histories in English, as indeed in any other language, than good novels or plays or poems. When one has mentioned the masterly works by Edward Gibbon, Thomas Carlyle, and James Anthony Froude, one has mentioned many of the enduring histories by Englishmen. In the United States no general history has been produced that can be compared to these works, though *The Rise of American Civilization* by Charles and Mary Beard probably comes close to them, and the volumes by Francis Parkman and W. H. Prescott must also be considered.

Yet scarce as great general histories are, truly great literary histories are even scarcer. The reason seems to be obvious enough. The writing of liter-

ary history calls, not only for all the high virtues necessary for the writing of general history, but several others besides, among them, a fine feeling for literary values, a keen perception of the interrelationship between environment, in its broadest sense, and the creative impulse, and the ability to distinguish between a writer's gift for dramatizing his largely private psychological aberrations and his gift for giving expression to the hopes, joys, anguishes, and ecstasies of the vast majority of men and women. If it is true that a mere novelist or playwright has to be omniscient properly to exercise his talents, how much more so is it true of the literary historian.

The United States was somewhat late in the matter of general historical writing. It was, indeed, not till well toward the end of the nineteenth century that professional historical writing achieved much respectability in this country. In the preceding 200 years there were, of course, many chronicles and historical encyclopedias, but most of their authors had small regard for truth and not very much more for the high qualities

of the English language. Even so magnificent a period, historically speaking, as the Civil War, was for two decades almost the exclusive province of collectors of legends, fervid lecturers, and hasty journalists.

Literary history lagged behind general history. There was *A History of American Literature*, by Moses Coit Tyler, published in 1878, but since it dealt chiefly with theologians, analysts, and jinglers, it can hardly be called a literary history. There were a half dozen others that concerned themselves more truly with literary works, but they were too brief and uncritical to be taken seriously. Probably few will disagree with the statement that it was not till 1900 that a thoroughly competent man, Barrett Wendell, attempted a serious study of our literature in a systematic manner, in *A Literary History of America*. Since then there have been many literary histories, some very useful for reference purposes, most of them, however, mere textbooks. A landmark as to scope was *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, published in 1917-1921, and now what amounts to its successor is issued under the editorship of Robert E. Spiller, Willard Thorp, Thomas H. Johnson, and Henry Seidel Canby, who have been assisted in their labors by Howard Mumford Jones, Dixon Wecter, and Stanley T. Williams. [*Literary History of the United States*. 3 volumes. Macmillan. \$20.00.]

More than five years of work went into this history. Altogether there are

55 contributors to it, most of them academicians. The editors state, sensibly enough, that "each generation should produce at least one literary history of the United States, for each generation must define the past in its own terms."

They apparently aim for the general intelligent readers, since they feel that "scholars can no longer be content to write for scholars; they must make their knowledge meaningful and applicable to humanity." By way of excuse for the basic plan of the book — allotting each subject to an authority on it — they say, "the United States has produced, in its life of less than two centuries, too much literature for any one man to read and digest. Its literary history can therefore best be written by a group of collaborators, whatever the risk of differences of perspective or opinion." The editors have not been content to let the contributors write their chapters. Many of the chapters, as originally submitted, "have been substantially revised in order to fit them into the larger plan, and parts of some have been lifted and incorporated elsewhere."

The individual chapters have no by-lines; the "table of authors" appears at the end of Volume II, but because of the extensive revisions, it is clearly not always to be taken too literally. While the entire work occupies three volumes, only two contain text; the third is devoted in its entirety to bibliographical material and the combined index.

II

The work reveals all the virtues and defects of current literary criticism and historical scholarship in America. Several of the chapters are quite good. Those on Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, both by Stanley T. Williams, are so sound, so effectively written, and so sensible as interpretation that they probably preempt the two subjects for many years to come. Dr. Williams rightly labels the bulk of Irving's work "insipid," but he hastens to add that Irving was not a mere merchant of words, and that beneath his "insipidities" burned one strong response to life, his sadness or romantic melancholy in the presence of the law of change." Dr. Williams dismisses Cooper as "a tyro in the more subtle aims of the novel"; at the same time, he is wholly cognizant of Cooper's awareness of "the moral quality of liberty" and of "his conviction that an aristocracy of worth was not inconsistent with the democratic ideal."

Even better are Dr. Williams' essays on Hawthorne and Emily Dickinson. He probes deeply into the "secret space" in Hawthorne's mind, his uncanny ability to distill "historical episodes into moods," and his "classic dignity." "Few American writers have obeyed so implicitly as he the imperious, unconscious dictates of genius." Dr. Williams illustrates his ideas with a masterly analysis of *The Scarlet Letter*. His discussion of Emily Dickinson is not only the best piece

in this *Literary History*; it is a superb job of literary criticism, one of the very best to see public print in the past twenty-five years. The Amherst recluse's "thrilling life as an adventuress in eternity — and as eternity's witty critic, too," seems to have an endless fascination for Dr. Williams. He is not unmindful of the fragmentary nature of her work, of its occasional unfathomable obscurity, of its spotty harshness of rhythm, but he keeps on returning to the soft magnificence of the lyrics of "this shy, intellectual, spiritually wayward woman," who was on friendly terms with infinity and who also cherished "a fairylike intimacy with plant and bird." "Where, in all the august company of mysticism, do we find her like? Her conjunction of the cosmic and the comic? She is a saint in cap and bells."

Also worth reading are Robert E. Spiller's chapter on Emerson; Dixon Wecter's chapter on Mark Twain; Odell Shepard's essay on Longfellow, Holmes and Lowell; Harry T. Levin's on "The Discovery of Bohemia"; Malcolm Cowley's essay on "How Writers Lived" in the period between the two World Wars; and H. L. Mencken's lively chapter on the American Language, in which a vast amount of fascinating information is compressed within the space of some seven thousand words.

The other articles are dull, poor, or atrocious. The discussions of our colonial fiction are almost unreadable. Professor F. O. Matthiessen has some

sensible things to say about Poe's criticism, but he seems to be confused by his poetry and short stories. In the chapter on "Humor," written by "Harold W. Thompson (with passages by Henry Seidel Canby)," a heroic effort is made to explain American humor in terms of American history and sociology but the characteristics and essence of the peculiar wit and burlesque and hyperbole that go to make up our national humor seem to evade the two authors. "The Hope of Reform," dealing with the era of the New Freedom, by Henry Steele Commager, is, surprisingly, pretty much of an intellectual quickie.

Perhaps the three least satisfying chapters are "A Cycle of Fiction," by Maxwell Geismar; "Abraham Lincoln: The Soil and the Seed," by Carl Sandburg; and "Henry James," by Richard P. Blackmur. Mr. Geismar deals with such writers as Fitzgerald, Wolfe, Faulkner, and Farrell, but he is so interested in their backgrounds that he almost forgets their writings. Mr. Sandburg's essay on Lincoln, like his books on the Civil War President, is indiscriminate verbiage caked with sentimentalism. His very first sentence is a fair sample of his thinking and writing: "There is one man in whose words, spoken and written, the West of vast spaces and the East of many peoples are subsumed under one meaning." Mr. Blackmur may be a very profound man, as the more esoteric critical groups maintain, but one must add that he also makes no sense most of the time. His essay on

Henry James really might as well be about two other people, for all the relevance his words have to that author. What does he mean in the line: "If religion was in James an inner primal piety, history was a felt objective residue"? And in this: "In short, neither the domestic economy of social conventions nor the vocation of the artist was ever enough to bring out in James a mastery of substance equal to his mastery of form"?

III

The large number of poor pieces is not, however, the chief trouble with the work. Even if all the chapters were of the same high order as Dr. Williams', it would still be, at best, only a valuable compendium, and not a literary history. The basic concept of the editors, that a literary history can be written by a variety of hands, is dubious. Literary history, like any other art, calls for a unified point of view, reflecting a highly personal attitude toward the world, or any special aspect of it, which is to say, it can be practiced only in solitude, by one person. An attitude toward life cannot be arrived at by agreement among a group of people. It is something that grows in the mystic soil of the individual soul.

The editors claim that American literature has become too vast for one man to digest. This is a strange claim for academicians to make. English literature is older than American literature, yet no English literary historian of standing has ever been

frightened by the vastness of his subject, and one literary historian — a Frenchman, too — covered the subject so thoroughly and so well that his work is still held in the highest regard. And what Hippolyte Taine did for English literature, Émile Faguet did for French literature. In the case of American literature, unfortunately, the claim of the editors is not only bizarre in itself; it is not pertinent. From 1607 to 1811, when William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis" appeared, virtually no literature of any moment was produced in this country. Only chronicles, religious tracts, and sombre doggerel came from the colonial presses. Why the editors devote between a fifth and a fourth of the first volume — or between a tenth and an eighth of the two volumes of text — to this period is difficult to understand. Equally difficult to understand is the space they allot to orators, politicians, lady versifiers, feature writers and other journalists. Perhaps as much as a third of the entire project has little or no relationship to imaginative writing, and is therefore mostly a waste of effort.

The amount of respectable American literary art is clearly not sufficient to overwhelm the historian specializing in this field of expression. The better ones, despite their faults, at least had the virtue of possessing a point of view, without which no literary historian has a right to call himself such. Barrett Wendell was blind to Melville and bewildered by

Whitman; he didn't get the full measure of Hawthorne; he didn't always distinguish between the moral and the beautiful; but he did recognize, to borrow a phrase from D. H. Lawrence, that "there is a new voice in the old American classics," and he succeeded, to a great extent, in making that voice clear. Leon Kellner gave too much significance to the early Americans' absorption in the ways of God, as Ludwig Lewisohn, about two decades later, perhaps employed Freudianism a bit too freely as a critical instrument; but both, especially Dr. Lewisohn, shed fresh light upon the variations and quality of literary expression in America. Professors W. B. Cairns and W. P. Trent, though blessed with less imagination and critical insight, did reveal the importance of nationalism, among other factors, in our literary culture. Even Dr. Fred Lewis Pattee, whose absurd and crudely written histories held a generation of college students in their grip, had a point of view; it was an academic-moralistic-Fundamentalist point of view, true enough, and thus basically anti-literature, but at least it illuminated the forces that have lined up so often, here and elsewhere, against literary artists.

IV

In the interval between the two World Wars, two major errors have contributed to the low state of critical writing in America, and both are largely to blame for the disappoint-

ment of the latest literary history: the error of politico-economic-psychological interpretation and the error of over-specialization. The first error probably has its origins in the German school of historiography in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, in which many of our earliest professional historians got their training. The various elements of an author's background are no doubt important to the understanding of his work, but no amount of such explanation can take the place of evaluation. Too many of the authors in the present work, as has been pointed out, spend so much time telling about the society in which a writer lived that they forget to tell whether or not what he wrote has any quality, and precisely what that quality is.

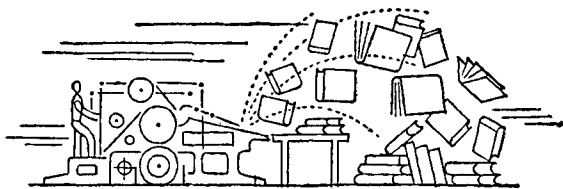
Many of them also ignore the fact that sometimes an author's background sheds very little light on the origins or quality of his work. Jane Austen lived in the Napoleonic Era, yet that era probably had slight impact on her novels. The Civil War was all around Emily Dickinson and Melville and Hawthorne, yet their works show small evidence of it. Only inferior writers and journalists can be wholly explained in terms of their times. Superior writers cannot be explained in this manner; there is always

an unexplained residue in them, for they deal with the abiding problems of man's relationship to others, to himself, and to the universe.

Specialization in literary criticism has run parallel with specialization in science, particularly in medical science. There is, of course, value in such specialization. Individual authors and "movements" merit intensive study; but these authors and "movements" belong to the organism of the national literature, which both nourishes them and draws nourishment from them. This organism of the national literature, this national psyche, is the proper province of the literary historian. Van Wyck Brooks was a very admirable literary historian in his earliest books, but since then he has become a polite chronicler of social and literary manners. The younger men, meanwhile, have strayed off into the by-ways of specialism. There is great need for the return of the literary historian in the realm of literary comment. The combination of massive erudition, critical insight, and writing skill necessary for being a Hippolyte Taine or Émile Faguet is extremely rare, but it is well worth cultivating in so far as is possible. Literature is one of the supreme and abiding glories of the human soul, and the literary historian is its truest recorder and guardian.



THE CHECK LIST



HISTORY

THEIR FINEST HOUR, by Winston S. Churchill. \$6.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. In this second volume of his history of the Second World War, Mr. Churchill deals with the period between his assumption of the post of head of the British government to the victorious conclusion of the Battle of Britain and the Desert Victory, or, roughly, between May 1940 and January 1941. As in Volume I, there are long, dreary stretches of military detail, and there are also equally long, dreary stretches of Churchillian verbiage that are very embarrassing in their pomposity. But there are also magnificent passages, many of them, dealing with one of the noblest periods in human history and surely the most sublime in British history. Those seven months when the Germans threw everything they had at England, which stood alone, already mourned by the multitude and given up by the "experts," was truly the nation's finest hour, and in the description and appraisal of that hour Mr. Churchill's organ roll of majestic paragraph upon majestic paragraph is most appropriate, and reaches Olympian heights of effectiveness. "Alone, but upborne by every generous heartbeat of mankind, we had defied the tyrant in the height of his triumph." As history, in the long-range view, this volume probably suffers even more than the previous one. Mr. Churchill thinks that he was nearly always right, and his opponents nearly always wrong. Already Messrs. Reynaud and Gamelin, among others, have made sharp dents in his reputation as an im-

partial historian. In time, other critics will probably make still more dents. But no one will deny that Mr. Churchill's work will form a primary source book for future historians.

PATHS TO THE PRESENT, by Arthur M. Schlesinger. \$4.00. *Macmillan*. There are thirteen essays here on a variety of subjects, from "The Rôle of the Immigrant" to "Food in the Making of America," and from "Biography of a Nation of Joiners" to "The City in American Civilization." At this late date, it is hardly necessary to offer extended comment upon any writings by Dr. Schlesinger of Harvard, one of the most distinguished and most informed and most penetrating historians America has produced. He is a quiet thinker and does not wield adjectives like lesser colleagues of his at Harvard or Columbia or Princeton; he relies upon facts to tell their story. That, however, does not mean that he adheres to any bogus objectivity. If facts reveal a truth he tells the truth without hemming and hawing. His chapter on the immigrant in American history is a perfect model of objective historical writing and truth-telling. No super-patriotic Daughter or Son of the American Revolution can read it — if he or she ever will read it — without feeling deeply ashamed. In every way an excellent book, which will undoubtedly be read and pondered for decades to come.

STORY WITHOUT END, *An Informal History of the Jews*, by Solomon Landman and Benjamin Efron. \$3.00. *Holt*. It may

well be that this is the best one-volume history of the Jews in English. The authors begin with the earliest known tribal history of the Semitic peoples, and then review the story of the Old Testament, not in the dogmatic manner, but from the point of view of the best sociological, economic and theological criticism, so that what emerges is a living, fascinating chronicle. They are equally successful with the later periods, especially with the long and dark ghetto period and the anti-Semitic outbreaks of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. And they describe the Zionist movement concisely, fairly, and with an eye to its romance and drama. The writing throughout is simple and lively.

WESTERN UNION, *A Study of the Trend Toward European Unity*, by Andrew and Frances Boyd. \$3.00. *Public Affairs*. A hasty survey of the statements and movements in favor of Western Union during the past two hundred years. As a reference book for students, it might prove to be virtually indispensable: it has eleven appendices of speeches and treaties, and even the authors' text is cluttered with quotations, charts and statistics. For the same reason, the book might well be ignored by the layman. The heavy documentation renders it almost unreadable, and recent events, especially the North Atlantic Treaty, make it partially out of date.

BIOGRAPHY

INISHFALLEN, FARE THEE WELL, by Sean O'Casey. \$4.75. *Macmillan*. In this fourth volume of his autobiography, the eminent Irish playwright deals with his last few years in Ireland, devoting considerable space to Irish politics, the Catholic Church, and the Abbey Theatre, which first presented Mr. O'Casey to the world. He offers some remarkable portraits, particularly of his saintly and courageous mother and of a Dr. Walter McDonald, a most unusual Catholic theologian, whose mind he respected enormously. On the other hand,

there are acid profiles of DeValera and Æ, for both of whom he had a large contempt. The writing, as usual with Mr. O'Casey, is a strange mixture of the truly poetic and the embarrassingly mushy. But, on the whole, the book is well worth the time it takes to read it, which is far more than can be said for most contemporary biographical works.

16 SELF SKETCHES, by Bernard Shaw. \$3.50. *Dodd, Mead*. DAYS WITH BERNARD SHAW, by Stephen Winsten. \$3.75. *Vanguard*. The sad news is that Shaw still has not written his autobiography. His sixteen self sketches are no substitute for it. Some of them were written as far back as 1898; others were written three and four years ago. Factually, there isn't very much in them that devout Shavians haven't known right along. But his followers — and indeed, all lovers of magnificent writing and paradoxical thinking — will welcome Shaw's collection. He flirts with what he calls vitalism, he even has a good word for baptism, and he is on all sides of the fence when commenting upon capitalism, socialism, and Communism. But he is always readable, always, despite all his horse-play, there is evident the great artist, the great man of sentiment, the man of sorrows, the man who could define humor as "Anything that makes you laugh. But the finest sort draws a tear along with the laugh," the man who visited Parliament only once in his life, because decent people, according to him, would not lower themselves to be members of it. Mr. Winsten, who had the good fortune to be a neighbor of Shaw's in Ayot Saint Lawrence, records some of the master's conversations with him and his wife. Shaw, in his usual spirit of mischief-making, has questioned some of the quotations Mr. Winsten ascribed to him, but there can be no doubt that substantially they are at least 100 proof Shaw. For example: "God is capable of playing pranks, and He's always mixing Himself up with artists. It's the only company He cares to keep." Both books have a number of superb illustrations.

A DREAMER'S JOURNEY, by Morris Raphael Cohen. \$4.00. *Beacon*. Dr. Cohen apparently worked on this autobiography in spurts and spasms, and he left it unfinished when he died in 1947, at the age of 67. But he had finished enough of it to assure for it a long life, for it is easily one of the most memorable, most moving, and most wise autobiographies ever written by an American. "A stray dog" among philosophers, as he called himself, he yet illuminated American metaphysics, epistemology, jurisprudence, scientific methodology, ethics, and even religious thought (much as he would have objected to this claim) as few others have done, and he easily will rank along with William James, George Santayana, Josiah Royce, and George Herbert Palmer. But here he concerns himself with his origins and day-to-day life. He describes his parents as saintly folk, and he does so with classic restraint; he speaks of his wife with an extraordinary tenderness, and he writes about his poverty and hardships with remarkable objectivity and effectiveness. He is for mercy and justice and humility everywhere, at all times, and to all peoples. He is, of course, for science, but he keeps on reminding scientists that "we are in a universe which contains a reality which is and always will be beyond all our knowledge and power." There are many good reproductions of photographs, a bibliography of Dr. Cohen's writings, and a fine epilogue by his son, Dr. Felix S. Cohen.

GARRICK, by Margaret Barton. \$5.00. *Macmillan*. A satisfying biography of the eighteenth-century actor, regarded by many as the greatest thespian ever to cast his shadow over the English stage. Garrick's history is in the Horatio Alger vein: as a young man of twenty, he rose from obscurity to establish a reputation as a brilliant performer, an adroit stage manager, and as the man who salvaged Shakespeare for posterity. His life is all the more interesting since it was inextricably involved with the career of Dr. Johnson, and such other richly

colorful figures as Hogarth, Peg Woffington and Mrs. Siddons. Margaret Barton has done a masterly job.

MEDICINE

SEARCHLIGHTS ON DELINQUENCY, edited by K. R. Eissler, M.D. \$10.00. *International Universities Press*. This symposium of psychoanalytic studies on delinquency was prepared in honor of August Aichorn, a friend and associate of Sigmund Freud and one of the pioneers in the study of juvenile delinquency. Like all such symposia, this volume is uneven in quality. Every paper is, however, written by an internationally prominent student in the field of delinquency, and a careful reading of the book will certainly give doctors, social workers, teachers, parents, and other people professionally interested in the field a remarkably full background in the psychoanalytic approach to this problem. Especially interesting and useful to the non-medical reader, is the section on the etiology and development of delinquency. Here, papers by such figures as Anna Freud, Margaret Fries and Fritz Wittels discuss the factors and the forces of childhood life which lead to delinquency. This book cannot be recommended to the general reader interested in popularized psychoanalytic writing. It is "must" reading, however, for the serious student of the subject and for those who are either parentally or professionally involved in the problem of delinquency.

THE PROBLEM DRINKER, by Joseph Hirsh. \$3.00. *Duell, Sloan & Pearce*. Mr. Hirsh, the executive director of the Research Council on the Problems of Alcohol, has collected in this little book all the pertinent information which has been gathered on the problem of alcohol in recent years. He deals not only with the pathological drunkard, but, what is more significant, with the person who merely drinks a little more than is good for him. This individual, as Mr. Hirsh makes plain, is also a problem drinker, and, from a numerical viewpoint, a much more serious

problem than the habitual drunkard. In line with modern medical and sociological thinking on the subject, Mr. Hirsh discusses alcoholism as a disease, rather than as a sin or crime. There is also an interesting report on the effects of alcohol on the body. An illuminating work.

MUSIC

THE WORLD'S GREAT OPERAS, by John Tasker Howard. \$2.95. *Random House*. Mr. Howard here gives the stories of 205 operas by 95 composers, which is to say, he gives the stories of virtually all the important operas in the history of music. There are four appendices: brief biographies of the composers, a listing of the librettists, a listing of the sources and derivations of the plots, and an index of the characters in the operas. For an introduction Mr. Howard offers "a brief background" of the history of opera. He is a very capable musicologist and commands a clear writing style, and his book is most useful and belongs on the shelf of every professional and amateur musician.

THE VICTOR BOOK OF SYMPHONIES, by Charles O'Connell. \$3.95. *Simon & Schuster*. This is so thorough a revision of the celebrated book which first appeared in 1935 that it is virtually a new book. Here Mr. O'Connell devotes himself exclusively to the symphony, and he analyzes 138 symphonies by 45 composers. Needless to say, the discussions are uniformly sound and comprehensive and well written. There are a glossary of musical terms and a list of recordings. A first-rate job.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE WRITTEN WORD, by Gorham Munson. \$2.95. *Creative Age*. This handbook is addressed to "all who wish to gain skill with the written word in the English-American language." It deals only with prose and is aimed at both amateurs and professionals. It is full of sound advice about technique and marketing, and it is well

written — which is not always true of such handbooks. Mr. Munson does not consider himself above saying several good words in behalf of the successful writing of journalism, but he makes sure that the reader knows that journalism differs from great prose and also from "scripture." Mr. Munson is a veteran teacher of writing at the New School for Social Research, where he is amazingly popular; from this very able and useful book it is easy to see why.

THE ETHICS OF AMBIGUITY, by Simone de Beauvoir. \$3.00. *Philosophical Library*. Having asserted, at considerable length, the absurdity and ambiguity of man's situation in this world, the existentialists are now attempting to provide him with an ethical system. In undertaking this assignment, Simone de Beauvoir appears to have all the necessary qualifications: first, she is Jean-Paul Sartre's wife; second, she is totally unintelligible; and third, she is loaded with paradoxes, of which "in order for the return to the positive to be genuine it must involve negativity" is a fair sample. What Mme. Sartre is saying in this essay is very uncertain. The most explicit statement in the book demands "the rejection of every principle of authority," but even this injunction is qualified to the point of meaninglessness. Tough sledding, and not worth the ride.

THE YANKEES, A Pictorial History of Baseball's Greatest Club, by John Durant. \$2.95. *Hastings House*. A nostalgic photographic record of the New York Yankees, from the time when they played on Hilltop Park and were known as the Highlanders, down to 1948. Pictures of old-time baseball players seem to have a way of evoking the past as few other things can, and this book should make pleasant browsing for all but the most unrepentant non-fans of the game. Some of the best of the hundred-odd pictures are among the oldest; it comes as a surprise to learn that the techniques of action photography were so well developed at the turn of the century, when Hal Chase, Willie Keeler and Clark Griffith were active.

THE OPEN FORUM



SELF-INDICTMENT

SIR: I want to give my heartfelt thanks to THE AMERICAN MERCURY for printing the transcript of the "Meet the Press" appearance of Dr. Hewlett Johnson, the "Red Dean" of Canterbury, in the May issue. After reading it I am more than ever convinced that the best way to expose men like him is to let them talk and just print what they say; editorial comment would be superfluous. A man who didn't know that Marx called religion the opium of the people; a man who had never even heard the charge that there are 12 million people in Soviet concentration camps; a man who can infer religious freedom from the existence of two or three churches; a man who can identify the love-thy-neighbor Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount with the savage repression of the police state — such a man obviously doesn't need to be attacked by others. Every time he opens his own mouth he's indicting himself.

HORACE SELIG

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SHOULD WOMEN KICK?

SIR: Waverley Root's article, "Women Have Nothing to Kick About," in the April MERCURY, is a blast of hot air. The fact is that the female has two strikes on her the moment she is born. And we are all aware of this — make no mistake about it. For if by some occult manipulation a female were to awaken in the morning and find she had been trans-

formed into a male she would go into ecstatic handsprings and pass around the cigars. Similarly, if a man, no matter how old, were to awaken and discover himself a female he would arise and straightaway hang himself.

By her particular structure woman is condemned to be on the receiving end of things, especially of man's attentions. Now take a close gander at the majority of men and tell me if that's good. . . .

CHAS. OVERILL

Newport Beach, Cal.

SIR: Mr. Root's article should have had the title, "Immensely Wealthy Women Have Nothing to Kick About." Homes equipped with \$30 beaters, automatic laundries, ironing mangles, garbage disposals, dishwashers, pressure cookers, and other luxuries mentioned by him are *very, very* rare. A check-up among the top-income families here in San Antonio revealed less than a half-dozen homes with all those labor-saving gadgets. And this is a city nearing the 400,000-mark.

Mrs. Stern's article ["Women Are Household Slaves," in the January MERCURY] was about the *average* housewife. Income-tax returns show 47,325,147 individuals with adjusted gross incomes below \$5000. She was speaking for this group. In answering her, Mr. Root appears to be representing the 2,640,327 persons who have an adjusted gross income of more than \$5000.

Mrs. Stern was interested in the 17,469,690 homes with more than one child. Mr. Root, with his "one small daughter," was speaking

for the one-child group numbering 7,623,842 homes. I wonder how he would make out as a home-maker in the 3,428,290 homes with four and five children. I daresay he would be saving for the education of his brood rather than buying dishwashers and garbage-disposal units. The picture of two sick children, a wet baby, and two hungry school-agers, on his hands teases my imagination.

The grossest inaccuracy in Mr. Root's picture concerns the old-fashioned mother making her cakes and putting them into a wood-burning oven. He should have mentioned how she got the ingredients for the cake. Papa got up before sunrise and milked the cow. He fed the chickens. He broke the soil and grew the wheat. He felled a tree and chopped the wood, made the fire, and then carried out the ashes. *Then* mama had milk, eggs and flour, and a fire, for cooking. . . .

LOIS G. MORRISON

San Antonio, Tex.

ARE REPUBLICANS GOOD PEOPLE?

SIR: The article, "Why the Republicans Lost," by Clarence Budington Kelland, in the February MERCURY, went right to the heart of the main trouble. . . . The Republican party was organized for a good and Christian cause, and was supported, in my opinion, by the best people of the nation. Up to 1900 it was the temperance party. But the professional politicians yielded to the influence of the liquor business, instead of seeking earnest support from the people that believe in temperance and clean living. The party grew silent on moral questions and lost the enthusiastic support of the good people. The church should have more influence in public affairs. . . .

What more Christian thing could be done than elect to office men who would fight sin and corruption and stand solid for right and justice? In my opinion, every minister should have a thorough education in the science of government politics. He should educate his flock to its responsibility to our govern-

ment as intelligent American citizens. Then, if the Republican party would do its duty, it would get the church vote.

In Civil War days it was said that not every Democrat was a horse-thief but that every horse-thief was a Democrat. Let the Republican party stand for right and justice with *courage and determination*; then it will win.

SAM B. WOODS

Griffith Lake, Ind.

"LEMONADE LUCY"

SIR: In the February MERCURY, Wenzell Brown states, in his reappraisal of Rutherford B. Hayes, that Hayes married Lucy Webb of Ohio. For your information, she was a cousin of my grandfather, Oliver Webb of Ohio. Since all the Ohio Webbs were very religious, Lucy Webb naturally forbade the serving of liquor at the White House. As a consequence, she was nick-named "Lemonade Lucy," which did not affect her in the least, for she had the courage of her convictions. The article states that it was the President who issued the order, but it was Lucy, and my grandfather rejoiced at her courage.

NAYAN WEBB SMITH

Manhattan Beach, Cal.

WHAT GERIATRICS CAN DO

SIR: Francis and Katharine Drake's article in the March MERCURY on "How to Live Longer" was both interesting and timely. It stirred up interest in those who prize health above all else.

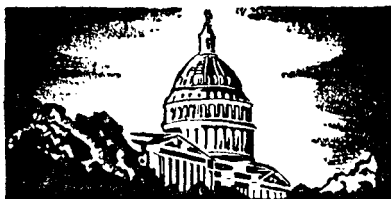
The article, of course, suffered the usual ills of a medical article written by laymen, and is replete with inaccuracies, naïve statements, and that carelessness with the truth so common among newspaper writers.

The first paragraph, which states that "our bodies and organs are capable of reaching 100 without wearing out in any vital part" could be disputed at once if com-

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(Continued from page 763)

parative histological examinations were made. The average doctor will practice all his life without ever seeing an individual of 100 years. "Great Aunt Martha" may be as "spry as a lark at 84," but then there are old larks and young larks.

What the authors say about the dangers of obesity in shortening life is perfectly true, but if it is not "natural" to gain weight in middle life, then why is this phenomenon so prevalent? "Natural" does not mean "advisable."

Nature's repeated attempts to regulate our lives impels the addition of fat after 40 to slow down our activities; our arteries are degenerating, whether we will it or not. As an example of nature's care, take cholera, in which fluids from our tissues pour into the stomach and small intestine where the deadly germ is manufacturing its toxins. Emesis and catharsis are so violent that nature's drastic method of cure may cause death from dehydration.

I am very much in favor of geriatric clinics and it is interesting to note that less than 1 per cent of the patients in a Rhode Island clinic required hospitalization in ten years. Geriatricians, however, do not "thoroughly understand the aging process." No doctor understands just what changes take place in the individual that cause old age, except in a very superficial sense.

As to the "geriatric health program," there is nothing to that except the health program of a well-versed and capable specialist in internal medicine. The authors mention seven states where "first class private geriatric care" may be obtained. Does this mean that any similar type of care would be second rate in the states which were not mentioned in the article? The authors' profound ignorance of medicine is illustrated when they prattle about "infections in both sinuses" (what, only two?) and "whispers over the heart."

The article is a good plug for geriatrics, and emphasizes the importance of early prophylaxis and expert care of the aged, and for this it is to be commended.

ALBERT S. TENNEY, M.D.

East Orange, N. J.

SIR: The opening statement to which Dr. Tenney objects was quoted directly from *The Second Forty Years*, by Dr. Edward J. Stieglitz, an eminent authority in the field. In general, we think that Dr. Tenney's quarrel lies not with us but with other members of his own profession, for every scientific statement in the article was checked and approved beforehand by three well known geriatricians.

FRANCIS & KATHARINE DRAKE
New York City

THE MENACE OF POLYGYNY

SIR: In my opinion, THE AMERICAN MERCURY has printed a dangerous and subversive article. Ralph Linton's "The Case for Polygyny," in the May issue, is only another example of the libertarian thought which has been undermining the moral fabric of the Republic for the past twenty-five years.

Professor Linton says that a good case can be made for polygyny if we accept the assumption that we owe it to our surplus women to provide for them. It's about time that this country stopped talking about "providing for" anyone. It's about time we went back to the virtues of self-reliance, and abandoned the Welfare State to those Europeans who don't know any better.

Sharing the women is no better than sharing the wealth. Both are socialistic.

DANIEL GILES
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

FAN MAIL

SIR: This note is to commend your recent issues. The new format is A-1. The poetry is, as usual, simple but profound, and of a character I can't find anywhere else these days. The April issue seems to have a perfect balance: Floyd Dell's recollections and the nature pieces (which are more than just nature pieces, in a way) of J. Frank Dobie and Alan Devoe as contrasted to the articles on U. S. defense policy and on China.

Keep it up.
RUDOLF FRIES
Bridgewater, Mass.

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